The Political Anatomy of the Everyday: The Case of the Libyan Arab al-Jamahiriyah (1977-2011)

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The Political Anatomy of the Everyday: The Case of the Libyan Arab al-Jamāhīrīyah (1977-2011)

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Declaration

Abstract

Most academic literature examining the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah not only reduces power into a mere question of failing structures and the supremacy of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi, but also triggers the disappearance of Libyans from their own history. In response, this study relies on a conceptual framework that looks at power and resistance as socio-cultural and dialogical processes to be studied through the everyday life of people. It adopts a methodological approach that privileges the subjective experiences of Libyans and bases its empirical study on oral histories/narratives. At the intersection of political sociology and political anthropology, the work of Sara Ahmed, Laurent Berlant, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Achille Mbembe, James C. Scott and Slavoj Žižek is brought into critical dialogue to investigate and cloud the distinction between power and resistance in the everyday. The interrelated findings of the study, divided across four chapters, reveal, firstly, how power is experienced as imposed, focusing on the disciplinary effects of violence, surveillance and fear over people's everyday lives. Secondly, they show that, while people constantly try to manipulate those controlling mechanisms, their attempts often end up sustaining the power of the regime. This aspect emerges in people's interactions with the ideological symbols and structures of the regime. In such a situation, humor, dissimulation and corruption play a very ambiguous role in mocking and maneuvering power, while (re)producing its mechanisms. Thirdly, the study outlines how quotidian fantasies and desires shape dynamics of power and resistance, showing the gradual emergence of popular hopes for a more consumerist and modern Libya. The complex array of dynamics that characterised the political anatomy of the everyday during al-Jamāhīrīyah becomes relevant for the revolutionary events of 2011, which led to its fall. The fourth thematic chapter shows the necessity to comprehend the everyday role of people in sustaining those dynamics of power and resistance in the present, following the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah. The study sheds light on the empirical complexity of power and resistance and those spaces in-between, and thereby contributes not only to the theoretical understanding of mundane aspects of power and political authority, but also to the study of Libya and, more generally, the Middle East.

Keywords: al-Jamāhīrīyah, everyday life, Libya, power, resistance, revolution, Qadhdhafi.

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List of Abbreviations

ASU	Arab Socialist Union
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
GICDF	Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation
IMF	International Monetary Fund
LYD	Libyan Dinars
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NASCo	National Supply Corporation
NFSL	National Salvation Front of Libya
NTC	National Transitional Council
OPEC	Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries
PC	People's Committees
RC	Revolutionary Committees
RCC	Revolutionary Command Council
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
UNSCR	United Nations Security Council Resolution
WMD	Weapons of Mass Destruction
WTO	World Trade Organization

Transliteration System

Spelling of Consonants

ء	’	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ڤ	g
د	d	ك	k
ذ	dh	ل	l
ر	r	م	m
ز	z	ن	n
س	s	ه	h
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y
ض	ḍ		

Spelling of Vowels

Long	ا	ā
	و	ū
	ي	ī
Diphthongs	ـَو	aw
	ـِي	ay
Short	ـَ	a
	ـُ	u
	ـِ	i

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Dedication

This work is dedicated to all the Libyans who participated in this project and beyond.

1. Introduction

On 1 September 1969, a group of seventy graduates of the armed forces led by Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi overthrew the monarchy of King Idris in a bloodless coup d'état, also known as al-Fatḥ (The Opening) Revolution. The coup was a reaction to the unresolved, yet growing, crisis of legitimacy of the Senusi monarchy, whose close alliance to Western countries clashed with the mounting Pan-Arab and anti-colonial identity in the region. While the group of free-officers oversaw the initial takeover and political development of the country, the launch of the 'Cultural Revolution' in 1973 signalled Qadhdhafi's determination to consolidate his power and shape the country's future according to his revolutionary vision. Numerous political and economic measures were launched, whose final implementation officially came about with the establishment of the Libyan Arab al-Jamāhīrīyah[1] [The Republic of the Masses] in 1977. The egalitarian and secular ideas contained in his philosophical pamphlet, 'The Green Book,'[2] guided the transformation of the country. Eager to turn Libya into a successful revolutionary and anti-imperialist vanguard, the country not only became a political and economic laboratory, but also embarked on a path of military and ideological confrontation with the West. This process was implemented with increasing suppression of those who allegedly challenged the leadership of the Libyan regime, as such attempts were viewed as treason or Western-led conspiracies. While the regime underwent numerous changes throughout the years, al-Jamāhīrīyah regime remained firmly in power until 2011.

Following the revolutionary course of events that characterised Tunisia and Egypt, in January and February 2011, thousands of Libyans marched into the streets to protest against the regime and to demand justice, economic reforms and the resignation of Qadhdhafi. These protests turned quickly into a full-scale civil war between NATO-backed 'rebels' and 'pro-regime' forces until the capture and killing of Qadhdhafi in October 2011, which seemed to put an end to the violence. Many Libyans – together with Western politicians – celebrated the deposition of the Libyan leader as the end of forty-two years of authoritarian and dictatorial rule, and as paving the way to a more democratic future. Instead, political instability and civil strife have continued up to the present and the prospects for democracy were replaced with violence and war. This study analyses the historical period that begins with the establishment of al-

[1] Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi coined this term. It is a neologism combining two Arabic words: jamāhīr (masses) and jumhūriyya (republic), meaning: 'republic of the masses.'
[2] Muammar Al Gathafi (2005) *The Green Book* (Reading: Ithaca Press).

Jamāhīrīyah in 1977 to its fall in 2011, and its primary objective is to comprehend how it has marked indelibly the political history of Libya.

The motivating reason for this enquiry emerges from the way most academic literature has studied the political history of Libya. These analyses present al-Jamāhīrīyah as another Libyan historical variation – from the colonial period to the present - of the theme of statelessness.[3] Various authors point out the absence of the state and over-emphasise the role, ideas and speeches of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi, whose name was used interchangeably to refer to 'Libya,' thus reiterating an Orientalist understanding of the Middle East. All these studies focus exclusively on how al-Jamāhīrīyah, as Qadhdhafi-oriented and state-lacking, not only became increasingly authoritarian, but also a 'rogue' and 'pariah' state. An equally derogatory explanation is used for the present situation of Libya. While the 2011 events took place in response to Qadhdhafi's authoritarianism, the ongoing "crisis" is instead seen as result of a domestic and especially the persistent failure to build a functioning/stable state.[4] The different interpretations are symptomatic of three main and interrelated limitations: Firstly, the conceptualisation of power as either strictly residing in institutions or in persons, in this case one man; secondly, their neglect of people from history, and thirdly, the ignorance about the political character of concepts such as failed states, statelessness, pariah state, etc., which are mainly used to justify political decisions against those same states and which are preparing the grounds for military interventions from Western governments.

Other academic works study the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah through more nuanced socio-political approaches and thus their conceptualisation of power considers the role of people. They examine, for instance, the process of élite formation, especially the role of the army of officers,[5] or they investigate popular attitudes about and responses to the charisma of

[3] See John Davis (1987) *Tribe and Revolution in Libya: The Zuwara and their politics* (London: I. B. Tauris); Lisa Anderson (1987) *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Dirk Vandewalle (2006) *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Luis Martinez (2007) *The Libyan Paradox* (London: Hurst & Co); Ali Bensaâd (ed.) (2012) La Libye révolutionnaire' [Revolutionary libya] In: *Politique Africaine* [African politics] 125 (Paris: Karthala), pp. 5-22; Carmen Geha (2014) Libya: The Intricacies of a Stateless Society, In: Geha, *Civil Society and Political Reform in Lebanon and Libya: Transition and Constraints* (London: Routledge); Ronald Bruce St John (2015) *Libya: Continuity and Change – 2nd Edition* **(**London and New York: Routledge).

[4] Mohammed El-Katiri (2012) *State-Building Challenges in A Post-Revolution Libya* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College); Jason Pack (ed.) (2014) *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future* (London: Palgrave Mac Millan).

[5] Moncef Ouannes (2009) *Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la libye contemporaine* [Military, élites and modernisation in contemporary libya] (Paris: L'Harmattan).

the leader,[6] the impact of the economic sanctions[7] or the ideological tenets of the regime.[8] These studies start offering views on how power circulates within the society, thus taking into account people's exchanges and interactions. Their preferred methodology, nonetheless, tends to average out people's responses due to its reliance on questionnaires, surveys, and – at times – interviews. In other words, they do not sketch out the nuanced and ambiguous ways in which power is negotiated, (re)produced and practiced by people in their everyday life.

This study builds on these latter socio-political approaches and tries to move away from those analyses that granted too much authority to the realm of formal politics and the state, approaching them as bounded and separate entities where power mostly resides. It instead conceptualizes power and resistance as socio-cultural and dialogical processes that lie at the core of human relations. For these reasons, the primary question of this study is as follows:

> How is power practiced, experienced, complied with and/or resisted in the everyday life under al-Jamāhīrīyah?

Conceptually, the study investigates this question by substituting the question of 'what is power' (the state or one-man) with 'how does power function' or, as Michel Foucault writes, it explores "'How,' not in the sense of 'How does it [power] manifest itself?' but 'By what means is it exercised?' and 'What happens when individuals exert (as they say) power over others?'"[9] It does not focus on the question of sovereignty or the privileged standpoint of the institutions but instead shifts the analysis to the dimension of the everyday life. In doing so, it takes the everyday as a site for navigating how people comply[10] with and manipulate[11] power, creating in-between spaces.[12] The study molds different concepts that guide not only the analysis of what quotidian practices and discourses reveal about the mechanisms of power and resistance,

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[6] Raymond A. Hinnebusch (1984) 'Charisma, Revolution, and State Formation: Qaddafi and Libya' In: *Third World Quarterly* 6:1, pp. 59-73.
[7] Tim Niblock (2001) *Pariah States & Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya, Sudan* (London: Lynne Rienner).
[8] Amal Obeidi (2001) *Political Culture in Libya* (Richmond: Curzon Press); Mabroka al-Werfalli, (2011) *Political Alienation in Libya: Assessing Citizens' Political Attitude and Behaviour* (Reading: Ithaca Press); Valerie Stocker (2012) *Les enfants de la jamahiriyya: la jeunesse libyenne sous kadhafi – comportements sociaux, attitudes politiques et perceptions du discours official* [The children of al-jamāhīrīyah: libyan youth under qadhdhafi - social behaviours, political attitudes and perceptions of the official discourse] (Brussels: Éditions Universitaires Européennes).
[9] Michel Foucault (1982) 'The Subject and Power,' in Dreyfus and Rainbow (eds.) *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, p. 217.
[10] Foucault (1993) *Sorvegliare e punire: nascita della prigione* [Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison] (Torino: Einaudi).
[11] Michel de Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkley: University of California Press); James C. Scott (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (London: Yale University Press).
[12] Achille Mbembe (2001) *On the Postcolony* (Berkley: University of California Press).

but also unveils the role of belief,[13] desires and hopes. It taps into the emotional and affective components of daily life, which involve a closer look at how power and resistance unfold into people's desires and aspirations when thinking about their future.[14]

The methodological approach adopted to answer the research question is designed around interpretive social science, and it relies on the collection of semi-structured, in-depth interviews that I call 'oral histories' or alternatively 'narratives'. By using in-depth interviews as the main tool for collecting primary data, the methodological approach of the study matches its primary objective of privileging the dimension of the everyday and capturing those forces that characterise its political anatomy. In other words, interviewees were asked to identify how power manifested itself in their lives and to describe where exactly the manifestation took place.[15] This then allowed the researcher to comprehend how people responded to the grip of power. Overall sixty-six Libyans nationals (only three of whom were female) residing in Italy and the United Kingdom were interviewed. Three of these interviews were conducted online (Skype).[16] All interviewees had left Libya in the aftermath of 2011. The lack of female interviews poses a major limitation to the study. The inability of the researcher to travel to Libya due to the political instability poses another limitation, but also provided opportunities. It allowed the interviewees to reflect on the past political history of their country by going beyond the self-imposing and dividing logic of the civil war. Finally, the narration of the past in light of a turbulent present, as well as an uncertain future, turned this study into an unexpected opportunity for the researcher to collect data on the interviewees' interpretations of the 2011 events.

The analysis of the findings is organized in four separate chapters, which build on and interact constantly with each other to elucidate the dialogical and socio-cultural relationship between power and resistance at the level of the everyday life. The first theme presents people's quotidian experience of violence, fear and surveillance; the second theme discusses the ambiguous nature of everyday actions in negotiating and (re)producing power and the third theme explores the role of mundane desires for the future and aspirations for a better life. The last thematic chapter assesses what aspects of the quotidian dynamics of power and resistance

[13] Slavoj Žižek (1987) *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso).
[14] Sara Ahmed (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press); Sara Ahmed (2010) *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press); Laurent Berlant (2011) *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press).
[15] See Appendix B for a sample of asked questions.
[16] See Appendix A for the list of interviewees.

that characterized al-Jamāhīrīyah emerged in the ways the interviewees interpreted the events in 2011, thus juxtaposing the ordinary dimension of the everyday to the extraordinary nature of the event. In doing so, the study makes an important contribution at the intersection of political sociology, political anthropology and policy-making, revealing the significance of the multiple dimensions of the political anatomy of the everyday.

By drawing on the case of al-Jamāhīrīyah, the study offers empirical insights that reveal the mutual entanglement of power and resistance in the everyday life of people. It engages and interacts with those works that discuss how power functions as a productive and disciplinary mechanism, whose capacity to spread capillary-like in society aims to control and subjugate people's everyday practices and emotions. At the same time, it sheds light on the nature of those in-between everyday geographies of power and resistance. It discusses not only people's constant and creative attempts to resist the grid of domination, but also how those action can induce silent compliance, thus (re)producing power. The study weaves the subtle threads linking power to resistance, and vice versa, to cloud their distinction and thus demonstrate their inherent fluidity and unpredictability. Its aim to explore power through the dimension of the everyday is significant because it allows rethinking the functioning role of the state, as well as the conceptual and empirical relevance of major events, such as revolutionary upheavals. This, in turn, has a major impact in the ambit of policy-making. Lastly, the focus on the case of al-Jamāhīrīyah allows this study to contribute to the field of area studies that examine the political and sociological history of those countries located in the Middle East and North Africa region, as well as to the growing literature on the 2011 political protests that shook the Arab region.

1.1 Chapters Outline

Chapter Two, 'Navigating Power and Resistance through the Everyday' explains how the main goal of the study emerges in relation to a defined gap in the existing literature on the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah. It does so by perusing the current literature and identifying two main thematic approaches. The chapter discusses how the study builds on those works that approached al-Jamāhīrīyah through more nuanced socio-political lenses and then maps out a conceptual framework capturing the ambiguous circulation of power and resistance in the everyday life. The proposed approach moulds concepts ranging from the work of Sara Ahmed,

Laurent Berlant, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Achille Mbembe, James C. Scott and Slavoj Žižek.

Chapter Three, 'Methodological Approach to the Study of the Everyday' connects the study's conceptual rationale to the most appropriate methodological approach that the study undertakes. It outlines how the research method (semi-structured, in-depth interviews) stems from the identified aim to explore how power is shaped and negotiated in the everyday life under al-Jamāhīrīyah, thus privileging the subjective experiences of Libyans. Drawing on an interpretive approach to knowledge, the chapter addresses the dynamics that emerged in the process of data collection and how they affected the positionality of the researcher vis-à-vis interviewees. It also reflects on both the limitations imposed and the sensitivity of the topic in light of the on-going civil war in Libya and discusses the ethical issues encountered.

Chapter Four, 'Situating al-Jamāhīrīyah,' provides an historical background that navigates four major dynamics of power and resistance marking the rise and fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah from 1969 to 2011. The chapter discusses the successful coup d'état in 1969 and analyzes how the anti-imperialist character of al-Fatḥ Revolution shaped the relationship between Libya and the West. Then, it explores what changes took place in the structure of al-Jamāhīrīyah in its attempts to survive international and domestic challenges, which accompanied the regime to the events that unfolded in 2011 and led to its collapse. The chapter provides the necessary historical context for the analysis of the four thematic findings of this study.

Chapter Five, 'Everyday Politics of Violence, Fear and Surveillance' discusses the first thematic findings of the study, analyses how the interviewees experienced and perceived power in the everyday life as violence, surveillance and fear. While the chapter discusses the existence and development of a quotidian culture of fear and social suspicion from the 1980s to the 2000s, it also highlights how the interviewees tried to escape its grip by playing the role of informants or using reports.

Chapter Six, *'*The Ambiguous Nature of the Everyday*'* examines the ambivalent nature of the interviewees' quotidian interactions during al-Jamāhīrīyah, focusing on people's interactions with the structures and symbols of the regime, such as the cult of personality, The Green Book, the Revolutionary Committees and corruption. Each subtheme demonstrates how people's quotidian activities and mundane actions constantly shifted between (re)producing and resisting power.

Chapter Seven, ‘The Futurity of the Everyday Life’ explores the interviewees’ quotidian imaginations and hopes for the future. It discusses how those ‘emotional’ elements of the everyday interact with dominant formations of power. The chapter discusses the main aspects that characterised those fantasies, such as a desire for a more consumerist society and the dream to turn Libya into Dubai, as well as the rise of Saif al-Islam.

Chapter Eight, ‘The Revolution and the Everyday’ discusses what aspects of the quotidian dynamics of power and resistance that characterized al-Jamāhīrīyah emerged in the ways the interviewees relayed the events of 2011. The chapter presents the interviewees’ perception of two main and opposing grand-narratives used to explain the 2011 events. Then, it unpacks their specificities, while threading the similarities.

Chapter Nine, ‘Conclusion’ draws together the findings and examines their implications across the fields of political sociology, political anthropology and policy-making. In this endeavour the chapter emphasises the significance of studying the political anatomy of the everyday when examining states, revolutions or formulating political decisions. It also offers a brief discussion on how the study and its limits open new research possibilities and questions to explore further.

2. Navigating Power and Resistance through the Everyday

The chapter focuses on reviewing the literature associated with the study of al-Jamāhīrīyah (1977-2011) in order to outline the academic context of the study, its significance and to draw clear linkages to this body of knowledge. Identifying two main conceptual approaches within the literature, the chapter examines their relevance, strengths and weaknesses. From this discussion, the research gap is identified and the main question of the study is developed, namely how power is experienced and practiced in the everyday life under al-Jamāhīrīyah. By answering this question, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how people shaped, (re)produced and negotiated the political dynamics of al-Jamāhīrīyah.

The chapter then considers the conceptual framework and its set of tools that guides the analysis of the study and allows a focus on the dimension of the everyday as a locus containing both elements of power and resistance. This section maps out a set of conceptual tools that capture the inherent ambiguities and constant fluidity of the quotidian practices of life vis-à-vis power and resistance.

2.1 Literature Review

This section peruses, in detail, the literature associated to the study of the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah, highlighting the existence of two main conceptual approaches.

2.1.1 Statelessness and One-Man

A recurrent theme has dominated the study of politics of al-Jamāhīrīyah: the notion of statelessness (non-État or a-étatisme in French). Scholars adopted this concept in order to describe the lack of a state characterizing al-Jamāhīrīyah. It is possible to trace the emergence of this concept in the study of the British anthropologist, John Davis, who firstly introduced it in the book 'Libyan Politics: Tribes and Revolution.' The study, which is also the first ethnographic work on al-Fatḥ [Opening] Revolution, investigates formal politics in Libya as re-modelled according to the Libyan leader's – Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi – philosophical pamphlet 'The Green Book.' Davis contends that the Libyan image of statelessness stems from two factors: firstly, the historical incapacity of the colonial authorities to establish hegemonic institutions in the eyes of the colonized population and secondly, the presence of a tribal

structure in Libyan society that also allowed Qadhdhafi to reject conventional notions of the state.[1] The history of the Libyan polity, as Davis argues, has not 'encrusted the state with respectability, nor given it any cloak of inevitability.'[2] Moreover, the hydrocarbon society and its oil revenues helped further to pursue a 'stateless' project, since it liberated the government from the need to tax its citizens.[3]

Other scholars adopted such approach.[4] For instance, in his book '*A Modern History of Libya,*' Dirk Vandewalle refers to statelessness as an 'anomaly,' a rejection of Libya's rulers, in particular of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi, to pursue the creation of a modern state. He writes that "one must understand how—starting with the retreat of the Ottoman Empire from the country in the early part of the twentieth century - a multi-layered set of factors promoted the idea among Libya's rulers that statelessness was both possible and desirable, while oil created the permissive and enabling environment to act upon that conviction."[5] For these reasons, Vandewalle argues that Qadhdhafi wrapped the country in a "cloak of nostalgia for earlier times when family and tribe provided solidarity, equity, and egalitarianism."[6] In '*The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya,*' Lisa Anderson claims that, while Tunisia consolidated a state structure in the aftermath of its independence from colonial rule, Libya pursued its historical tradition: the 'state [was] avoided.'[7] She contends Libya avoided the modern development of a state, refusing the complexities of the 'modern age' and maintaining – instead – "a sentimental longing for a mythical golden age when life was simpler" due to the presence of oil revenues.[8] In his edited volume '*The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future*' Jason Pack also constructs an argument that aligns with the notion of 'statelessness.' In this case, he describes Libyan political history as the result of an historical battle, stretching from the Ottomans to al-Jamāhīrīyah and afterwards, between 'centre and periphery.' As he writes, "an in-depth study of Libyan history over the past 150 years reveals

[1] John Davis (1987) *Tribe and Revolution in Libya: The Zuwara and their politics* (London: I. B. Tauris), pp. 42–44.
[2] Ibid, p. 41.
[3] Ibid, p. 262-263.
[4] See Luis Martinez (2007) *The Libyan Paradox* (London: Hurst & Co); Ali Bensaâd (ed.) (2012) La Libye révolutionnaire' [Revolutionary Libya] In: *Politique Africaine* [African Politics] 125 (Paris: Karthala), p.6; Carmen Geha (2014) Libya: The Intricacies of a Stateless Society, In: Geha, *Civil Society and Political Reform in Lebanon and Libya: Transition and Constraints* (London: Routledge); Ronald Bruce St John (2015) *Libya: Continuity and Change – 2nd Edition* **(**London and New York: Routledge).

[5] Dirk Vandewalle (2006) *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 3.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Lisa Anderson (1987) *The State and Social Transformation in Tunisia and Libya* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), pp. 251-269.
[8] Lisa Anderson (1990) 'Tribe and State: Libyan Anomalies' In: Philip Khoury and Joseph Kostiner (eds.) *Tribe and State Formation in the Middle East* (Berkley: California Press), p. 288-302.

a cyclical shift of power between the centre and the periphery," where peripheral forces always tried to reject an institutionalized-central power. This analysis, as he claims, "is clearly in fitting with the claim of Professors Dirk Vandewalle and Lisa Anderson that Libya's twentieth-century history differed from other despotic Arab regimes in that it was uniquely 'stateless.'"[9]

To strengthen further the argument of al-Jamāhīrīyah as a 'stateless' society, academic literature often provides two more important elements. Firstly, statelessness is often associated with the ideas of Qadhdhafi, which are labelled as 'authoritarian,' 'quixotic,'[10] idiosyncratic,'[11] or 'bizarre.'[12] Such analysis resonates with political claims that saw Qadhdhafi being defined as irrational. For instance, the President of the United States of America - Ronald Reagan -, who bombed Libya in 1986, described Qadhdhafi a 'mad dog.' Other former American presidents often spoke of Qadhdhafi 'in terms that implied their support for his downfall and death.' There is a long list of terms that have been used to characterize and stigmatize Qadhdhafi, which range from 'subhuman,' through 'cancer,' to 'egomaniac who would trigger World War III to make headlines,' and many more.[13] The absence of state institutions [not enough state] in Libya comes hand in hand with a focus on the 'bizarre' theoretical experimentation of Qadhdhafi [too much Qadhdhafi].

Secondly, a 'stateless' Libya governed by an 'irrational' man also relates to those other concepts describing the country as 'rogue state,'[14] 'pariah state,'[15] 'irrational state,'[16] 'quasi-

[9] Jason Pack (ed.) (2014) *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future* (London: Palgrave Mac Millan).
[10] Alison Parteger (2012) *Libya: The rise and fall of Qaddafi* (Yale: Yale University Press), p. 151.
[11] Vandewalle (1995) *Qadhafi's Libya, 1969–1994* (Basingstoke: Macmillan), p. 4.
[12] Parteger, *Libya*, p. 2, 85, 100, 191, 218, 240, 256.
[13] See Claudia Wright (1981–82) 'Libya and the West: Headlong into Confrontation?' In: *International Affairs* 58:1, p. 16.
[14] See Yahia H Zoubir (2002) 'Libya in US foreign policy: From rogue state to good fellow?' In: *Third World Quarterly* 23:1, pp. 31-53; Alex Miles (2003) *US Foreign Policy and the Rogue State Doctrine* (London: Routledge); Alison Parteger (2005) 'Libya: From Rogue State to Partner' In: *Journal of Middle Eastern Geopolitics* 1:2, pp. 5-9; Michael Onderco (2014) 'From a 'Rogue' to a Parolee: Analyzing Libya's 'De-roguing' In: Wolfang Wagner, Woutner Werner and Michael Onderco (eds.) *Deviance in International Relations: 'Rogue States' and International Security* (London: Palgrave MacMillan), pp. 171-192.
[15] Martinez, *The Libyan Paradox*; John Oakes (2011) *Libya: The History of Gaddafi's Pariah State* (Gloucester: The History Press).
[16] See, for instance, Yehezkel Dror (1971) *Crazy States: A Counterconventional Strategic Problem* (London: Health Lexington Books); Robert Mandel (1987) *Irrationality in International Confrontation* (London: Greenwood Press).

state'[17] or 'terrorist state.'[18] Once again, these labels describe al-Jamāhīrīyah in terms of weakness and resonate with dominant political – at times, Orientalist – discourses.[19] As Pinar Bilgin and Adam David Morton demonstrate, these concepts are the result of a historical process that has witnessed the annexation of social science by the 'friend and foe' logic of the Cold War, aligning academic evaluation to the hegemonic pretentions of the United States of America.[20] In this case, the use of these concepts to al-Jamāhīrīyah relate to its rejection of Western hegemony, thus a strong anti-imperialist ideology.[21]

This 'statelessness' approach betrays a lack of reflection on the power-knowledge relationship that have led some states to be represented as 'stateless' or 'failed' and how this helped to take action against them.[22] The use of these concepts to label certain states indirectly "served to facilitate different kinds of policies that are simplistically aimed at two different group of states: 'friends' or 'foes.'"[23] It avoids, thus, contemplating, as Noam Chomsky indicates, that Western governments-led military interventions were often justified on the basis of these academic and doctrinal concepts (failed, stateless, pariah, etc.). For instance, one of the most salient properties of such states is that "they do not protect their citizens from violence - and perhaps even destruction - or that decision makers regard such concerns as lower in priority than the short term power and wealth of the state's dominant sectors."[24] Chomsky's argument echoes the UNSC Resolution n. 1970,[25] whose raised concern over al-Jamāhīrīyah's failure to protect civilians and incite violence in 2011, prepared the grounds for the subsequent foreign military intervention.

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[17] See Robert H. Jackson (1990) *Quasi States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[18] See Anthony Lake (1994) 'Confronting Backlash States,' In: *Foreign Affairs*, available online at https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/iran/1994-03-01/confronting-backlash-states (access date: 12 June 2017); Martinez (2006) 'Libya: The Conversion of a 'Terrorist State' In: *Mediterranean Politics* 11:2, pp. 151-165.
[19] Jonathan Hill (2007) 'Beyond the Other? A Postcolonial Critique of the Failed States Thesis' In: *African Identities* 3:2, pp. 139-154.
[20] Pinar Bilgin & Adam David Morton (2002) 'Historicising representations of 'failed states': beyond the cold-war annexation of the social sciences?' In: *Third World Quarterly* 23:1, p. 63.
[21] In particular, see the study of Libyan scholar, Younis Ali Lahwej, on the formation of Libyan foreign policy toward the US and their their respective 'radical' stance toward each other, see Lahwej (1988) *Ideology and Power in Libyan Foreign Policy with Reference to Libyan-American Relations from the Revolution to the Lockerbie Affair* (University of Reading: unpublished PhD dissertation).
[22] Bilgin and Morton, Historicising representations of 'failed states,' p. 66.
[23] Ibid.
[24] Noam Chomsky (2006) *Failed States: The Abuse of Power and the Assault on Democracy* (New York: Metropolitan Books), p. 38.
[25] See United Nations Security Council (2011) Resolution 1970, available online at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_02/20110927_110226-UNSCR-1970.pdf (access date: 15 August 2016).

Overall, this approach explains al-Jamāhīrīyah as a stateless society based on four reasons: firstly, an historical continuum, starting from the Ottoman period, to build state-institutions; secondly, the presence of oil, which allowed a redistributive use of its revenues, thus fostering patronage rather than taxation; thirdly, a tribal structure that Qadhdhafi tried to revive during his ruling period and, lastly, Qadhdhafi's 'bizarre' ideas to create a revolutionary form of government. It is, nonetheless, important to highlight some limitations of this approach. For instance, reflecting on the work of those who view the social history of Libya as a variation on the theme of statelessness, the Libyan scholar, Ali Ahmida, argues that "if one does not assume the necessity for a centralized state, its absence does not necessarily constitute a sign of weakness, but is rather an indicator of different regional social formations providing structural institutions that represent a type of state formation."[26] The problematic assumption of taking the 'state' as a necessary element for 'normal' politics is used to reveal a weakness in the country's political development, as Ahmida writes. To explain this weakness also entailed an over-focus on the role, figure, ideas and speeches of Qadhdhafi, thus signalling an idea of power residing only in one-man.

To measure statelessness as a weakness also evokes discourses of 'irrationality' and 'chaos,' which - combined with the 'quixotic' ideas of Qadhdhafi - trigger the disappearance of Libyans – and their voices - from the history of their own country. Moreover, all these studies focus exclusively on how al-Jamāhīrīyah, as Qadhdhafi-oriented and state-lacking, managed to hold power, and become increasingly authoritarian. They proceed without taking into account how people practiced, supported and perceived power. This notion of statelessness continued to influence the understanding of Libya's situation post-2011, thus after the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah. Lisa Anderson writes that after 2011 "Libya confronts the complexity not of democratization but of state formation. It will need to construct a coherent national identity and public administration out of Qadhdhafi's shambles."[27] Similarly, Mohammed El-Katiri argues that: "a key challenge confronting the interim government in Libya is the creation of political institutions to provide for the functioning of an effective democratic state. The interim government is, in effect, inheriting a stateless state."[28] By relying on the 'statelessness' concept

[26] Ali Abdullatif Ahmida (2005) *Forgotten Voices – Power and agency in colonial and postcolonial Libya* (London: Routledge), p. 69.
[27] Anderson (2011) 'Demystifying the Arab Spring: Parsing the Differences between Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya' In: *Foreign Affairs* 90:3, p. 7.
[28] Mohammed El-Katiri (2012) *State-Building Challenges in A Post-Revolution Libya* (Carlisle: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College), p. 23.

to explain the difficulties Libya is facing in the aftermath of the collapse of al-Jamāhīrīyah, scholars and analysts risk equating the chaos and violence of the 2011 civil war only to an historical and domestic weakness of the country: the lack of a state. They, consequently, re-iterate an indirect support that serves foreign-led military intervention, on the basis of Libya being stateless and governed by an irrational leader. This also means obliterating the causes and effects of a foreign-led military intervention in the domestic dynamics of Libya. In other words, they leave no room for assessing what role foreign-led military intervention play in dismantling established patterns of security and governance, thus 'failed' states.

While this approach continues to explain the situation of Libya post-2011, it reduces power to an element strictly residing into either an institution or one-man, while triggering the disappearance of people from the history of their own country. These studies, as shown above, had a tendency to describe Libya as 'stateless' and use 'Qadhdhafi' and 'Libya' as synonyms, reiterating an Orientalist understanding of the Middle East. Scholars and analysts took 'the part [Qadhdhafi] for the whole [Libya],' assuming that there was no 'Libya-ness' beyond the macro-historical meta-narrative of 'Qadhdhafi-ness.' The ideas and personality of Qadhdhafi obscured Libya's complexity, and one Libyan became the symbol for all Libyans.[29] To hold the state as the 'normal' repository of power risks missing how power functions as a productive force at the level of the everyday life of people, i.e. requiring citizens to perform certain rituals. For instance, when academic studies reduce al-Jamāhīrīyah's anti-imperialist ideology and practices to Qadhdhafi's 'bizarre or extravagant' whims, they underestimate the hegemonic and historical role such discourses played at the level of the everyday. In other words, they do not take into account how people experienced and related to those values. Similarly, to claim that tribal dynamics prevent the creation of a central/national structure means ignoring how tribalism is accommodated and used in the everyday life of people, thus overseeing its elastic and changing structure.[30]

The state, therefore, is not the only institution that determines the dominant relations of power in society. Rather people play a crucial role in sustaining and challenging such relations through their quotidian interactions and exchanges. In their everyday lives, while subjects come to experience and perceive power, they also enact their agency, shape their imagination, desires

[29] See Matteo Capasso and Igor Cherstich (2014) 'Guest Editors' Note: The Libyan Event and the Part for the Whole' In: *Middle East Critique* 23:4, pp. 379-385.
[30] See also Igor Cherstich (2014) 'When Tribesmen do not act Tribal: Libyan Tribalism as Ideology (not as Schizophrenia)' In: *Middle East Critique* 23:4, pp. 405-421.

and fantasies. Their daily conducts are in a constant and dialogical relation with power, thus influencing its circulation and (re)production. Other academic works began to realize the importance of those dynamics, drawing on more socio-political approaches to the study of power and political authority in Libya, as the next section shows.

2.1.2 Socio-Political Approach

The importance of those studies lies in how they offer a more sociological and anthropological understanding of how power functioned in al-Jamāhīrīyah. They, for instance, provide an in-depth sociological analysis of the gradual development of political elites from the monarchical period to al-Jamāhīrīyah and how this affected the country's process of modernization, such as the work of Moncef Ouannes '*Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la Libye contemporaine*' [31] [Army, elites and modernisation in contemporary Libya]. This study advances an articulate inquiry on the role of the army since 1969 and their gradual transformation into a powerful élite that controlled al-Jamāhīrīyah's political arena. It shows how the concentration of power, as well as oil revenues, into their hands turned Libya into an authoritarian government, increasingly reliant on 'divide and rule' strategies, such as the use of tribal alliances. Also, it takes into account how those same strategies of power often were met with episodes of popular discontent and contestation toward the government, such as football incidents or the lynching of black Africans.[32] While the study relies on a strong socio-political approach that considers how diverse actors hold and wield power, it does not delve into the everyday experience of people.

By investigating in a more systematic manner questions of political culture, legitimacy and ideology within al-Jamāhīrīyah, there are other academic works that interact with the voices and opinions of Libyans. For instance, Amal Obeidi's '*Political Culture in Libya*'[33] explores the influence of state ideologies over Libyan university students in the mid-90s through surveys. Rather than categorising the ideology of al-Jamāhīrīyah as stateless or irrational, the study

[31] Moncef Ouannes (2009) *Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la libye contemporaine* [Military, élites and modernisation in contemporary libya] (Paris: L'Harmattan).
[32] Those incidents are also discussed in the work of Ethan Chorin (2012) *Exit Gaddafi: The Hidden History of the Libyan Revolution* (London: Saqi Books); George Joffe (2013)' Civil Activism and the Roots of the 2011 Uprising' in: Pack (ed.) *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future* (London: MacMillan).
[33] Amal Obeidi (2001) *Political Culture in Libya* (Richmond: Curzon Press), pp. 13-14.

assesses the symbolical and material impact of ideological values on young university students. The study gauges the interrelated nature of two concepts: political socialisation and political culture. It assesses the responses of students to the regime's efforts in mobilizing them around certain values, i.e. Pan Arabism, support for the liberation of Palestine, role of women, etc. It shows how the regime tried to consolidate its power through the transmission of values and ideas to students in order to structure their vision of the world, identity and actions. The study concludes that, while the young generation of students believed and shared those values emphasising a Pan-Arab identity and support of the Palestinian cause, the regime had also failed on other fronts. For instance, tribal identities still played an important social and economic role within society and most student expressed a strong disbelief in the possibility to participate to the decision-making process of the country, as 'The Green Book' proposed.

Those latter attitudes are important because they constitute the main argument of Mabrooka al-Werfalli's study of political legitimacy and political support of Libyans toward al-Jamāhīrīyah in the mid-2000s. In her '*Political Alienation in Libya: Assessing Citizens' Political Attitude and Behaviour*,' [34] she assesses what kind of political legitimacy and support Libyans demonstrated, and what reasons lay behind the findings. Al-Werfalli outlines two main points: firstly, the presence of an increasing level of political distance – meaning: alienation – among Libyans from the policies and rhetoric of al-Jamāhīrīyah and secondly, a widespread culture of corruption, which, in turn, also explains the growing distance between people and political institutions. Both studies are important because they depart from the structural approach and introduce the conceptual work of David Easton on the analysis of political systems, as well as the notion of charisma of Max Weber,[35] which al-Werfalli mentions in relation to Qadhdhafi's role in al-Jamāhīrīyah. Moreover, those studies give voice to the popular opinion of Libyans concerning the ideological values of al-Jamāhīrīyah, showing – at times – conflicting results. Although they focus on two different decades of al-Jamāhīrīyah, the 1990s and 2000s respectively, they shed light on important and nuanced dynamics that previous studies ignored. For instance, Obeidi examines al-Jamāhīrīyah's attempts to institutionalize revolutionary

[34] Mabroka al-Werfalli, (2011) *Political Alienation in Libya: Assessing Citizens' Political Attitude and Behaviour* (Reading: Ithaca Press).

[35] Such approach to charisma and state formation was similarly adopted by Raymond A. Hinnebusch (1984) 'Charisma, Revolution, and State Formation: Qaddafi and Libya' In: *Third World Quarterly* 6:1, pp. 59-73. In this study, Hinnebusch shows how the charismatic qualities of Qadhdhafi allowed him to maintain the leadership of the country. At the same time, the lack

culture in Libya – i.e. through military camps – and al-Werfalli reconstructs the increasing sense of societal disbelief and alienation towards their government during 2000s.

Other scattered and important insights on the lives of Libyans at the time of al-Jamāhīrīyah also emerge from the work of Tim Niblock, '*Pariah States & Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya, Sudan*.' [36] In a chapter dedicated to the impact of the international sanctions in Libya, Niblock gauges the response of al-Jamāhīrīyah's to the economic embargo, looking at its economic and political development, as well as its impact on the population. The study not only traces how the increasing emergence of corruption in Libyan society allowed the regime to maintain its power, but also offers detailed sketches of everyday life, describing how Libyans negotiated those changes. This focus on the role of power and resistance at the level of the everyday resonates more strongly in the study of an independent researcher, Valerie Stocker: '*Les enfants de la Jamahiriyya: Les jeunesse libyenne sous Kadhafi – comportements sociaux, attitudes politiques et perceptions du discourse officiel*'[37] [The children of al-Jamāhīrīyah: The Libyan youth under Qadhdhafi: social behaviours, political attitudes and perceptions of the official discourse]. The book examines the social and political attitudes of young Libyans toward the official ideological tenets of al-Jamāhīrīyah revealing a strong sense of dissimulation, loss and detachment. Stocker offers a complex picture of Libya, navigating from below those terrains of analysis that unveil how people perceived and – in part - contested the official discourse of the government, with a special focus on the youth. In particular, she draws on the work of Lisa Wedeen '*Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria*.' Wedeen analyses the power dynamics in Hafiz al-Asad's Syria through a conceptual framework that combines Michel Foucault's insights on power with Vaclav Havel's idea of 'dissimulation.' Relying on her personal experience in Libya, thus scattered ethnographic encounters and interviews, Stocker demonstrated the pervasiveness of 'as if' politics - as Wedeen had shown in Syria -, which is the need to pretend political support for official ideologies, among the Libyan youth.

These studies are important because of their reliance on alternative conceptual and methodological approaches. By focusing on socio-political questions, such as élites formations,

[36] Tim Niblock (2001) *Pariah States & Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya, Sudan* (London: Lynne Rienner).
[37] Valerie Stocker (2012) *Les enfants de la jamahiriyya: la jeunesse libyenne sous kadhafi – comportements sociaux, attitudes politiques et perceptions du discours official* [The children of al-jamāhīrīyah: libyan youth under qadhdhafi - social behaviours, political attitudes and perceptions of the official discourse] (Brussels: Éditions Universitaires Européennes).

political culture, ideology and/or legitimacy, they move beyond the notion of a state-lacking society, as well as the emphasis on the role of 'one-man.' Moreover, they start collecting their data 'from below,' thus seeking the views, opinions and experiences of Libyans through questionnaire, surveys, and – at times – interviews. Those socio-political lenses allow the recovering of the people's voices and the formulating of elaborate sketches of the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah. The question, however, remains whether one can move beyond the use of surveys or questionnaires, which have a tendency to average out the responses and attitudes of people. While these methods indicate the existence of general patterns that characterize the relationship between state and society, they do not sketch out the nuanced and ambiguous ways in which power is negotiated, (re)produced and practiced by people in their everyday life. This latter aspect, therefore, becomes the central research question of this study.

2.2 The Research Gap

The above discussion identifies a research gap in the study of how power configurations emerge and are shaped through the everyday life of people. Similar to those academic works that draw on socio-political approaches that interact with the voices and opinions of Libyans, this research builds on them but it also adds by paying particular attention to the role of 'practice' in the everyday life of Libyans. It identifies the everyday as a locus for the study of power, resistance, compliance, survival and those spaces in-between, constituting the political anatomy of the everyday life in al-Jamāhīrīyah. The main research question of this study, thus, becomes: 'How is power practiced, experienced, complied with and/or resisted in the everyday life under al-Jamāhīrīyah?' The answer will provide further insights on the socio-political dynamics that constituted the formation and circulation of power in al-Jamāhīrīyah, showing the crucial role Libyans played in shaping, negotiating and (re)producing relations of power. Also, this knowledge contributes to those theoretical debates on the definition of the political, the modalities of government, as well as the contentious practices, that constitute the anatomy of the everyday life.

For these reasons, it is important to develop a conceptual framework that provides the nuances in how Libyans not only dissimulated or withdrew their support towards al-Jamāhīrīyah, but also participated in the (re)production of many of the mechanisms that guaranteed its power. The next section does so by taking the sphere of the everyday life as a locus of acquiescence, domination, compliance and resistance, which allows the researcher to access the significance

and meanings of people's everyday experiences. Therefore, it enables a deeper understanding of the political anatomy of the everyday life during al-Jamāhīrīyah.

2.3 The Conceptual Framework of Power and Resistance

This section develops a conceptual framework that moves away from the studies that granted too much authority to the realm of formal politics and the state, identifying its lack or absence as closely connected to the figure of one-man, Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi. Instead the underlining conceptual frame of this study stresses what C. Wright Mills called the 'sociological imagination:' "an awareness between personal experience and the wider society." [38] By approaching the state as an 'effect'[39] or the end-result of practices, it pays attention to people's everyday lives, investigating the dimension of the quotidian, in order to comprehend how power is shaped and experienced. The discussion introduces the concept of everyday life as a site to study power and resistance. Then, it unpacks the more ambiguous, repetitive and conflicting ways in which power and resistance interact and crosscut the practice of everyday life. It does so by drawing on the works of several scholars and philosophers, such as Sara Ahmed, Laurent Berlant, Michel de Certeau, Michel Foucault, Achille Mbembe, James C. Scott and Slavoj Žižek. Discussion of concepts allows us to trace the presence of a dialogical relationship between power and resistance where power means drawing a line in the social, economic, political and ideological spheres of life while resistance means everything that tends to change the route traced by that line. Their dialogical relationship, however, is not a dichotomous one rather the analysis shows that the practice of the everyday is a dynamic process containing elements of order and disorder, power and resistance.

2.3.1 Navigating through the Everyday

What does 'everyday' or 'everyday life' stands for? Although many scholars and academics have engaged with the notion of everyday, the concept remains vaguely defined. Arguably, Rita Felski sums up its main critical point when she contends that the resonance of the

[38] C. Wright Mills (1959) *The Sociological Imagination*, p. 3.
[39] Timothy Mitchell (1991) 'The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,' *The American Political Science Review*, 85 (1), pp. 77-96; Timothy Mitchell (2006) Society, Economy and the State Effect. In: Gupta, A. & Sharma, A. (eds) *The Anthropology of the State: a Reader*, pp. 169-186 (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing).

'everyday' as a concept stems from its fuzzy ambiguous meanings.[40] It can refer to those practices that are commonplace and taken-for-granted or what happens in a typical and repetitive form. Thus, "everydayness is the positive continuity of endless repetition."[41] For some historian and philosophers to look at the everyday life meant to investigate how institutions – such as states or prisons – engineer and construct the lives of people. The site of the everyday life allows an exploration of routine actions whose repetition brings stability, order and submission to institutional authorities. The everyday, therefore, is a site where institutions and governments exercise control and domination. Other scholars explored the realm of the everyday to discover how people refuse being controlled, pointing to those ordinary practices which manipulate the dominant social rules. In this manner, they approach the study of the everyday as a locus where subjects construct creative and strategic actions in order to challenge the grid of discipline and domination, which they perceive as externally imposed on their lives.[42] The study of everyday life can bring to the fore how institutions exercise control and violence over people, so it unveils how continuous forms of clandestine and creative manipulation challenge this same grid of domination. It appears that both approaches demonstrate how closely connected is the study of everyday life to questions of power and resistance.[43] By studying the realm of the quotidian, it is possible to observe the gaps between competing normative systems in order to understand the effective exercise of domination and the development of new mechanisms and new practices.[44]

This study embraces the 'inherent un-decidability of the category of everyday life,'[45] trying to unfold and develop its hybrid[46] meanings via narratives recounting how people experienced power, while simultaneously influencing and changing their practices. It does not aim to

[40] Rita Felski (1999) 'The Invention of Everyday Life' In: *New Formations* 39, p. 15. (pp. 15-31) and Alf Lüdtke (1989) *The History of Everyday Life – Reconstructing historical experiences and ways of life* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 3.
[41] Barry Sandywell (2004) 'The Myth of Everyday Life: Toward a Heterology of the Ordinary' In: *Cultural Studies*, 18 (2-3), p. 163.
[42] Charles Tripp (2014) *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).
[43] Sherry Ortner (1995) 'Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal' In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 37:1, pp. 173-193.
[44] Marysia Galbraith (1999) ''We just want to live 'normally': Intersecting Discourse of Public, Private, Poland and the West' In: *Journal of the Society for the Anthropology of Europe*, 3(1), pp. 2-13; Georges Canguilhem (1991) *The normal and the pathological* (New York: Zone Books).See also Michael Hviid Jacobsen (2008) 'The Everyday: An Introduction to an introduction' In: Jacobsen (ed.) (2008) *Encountering the Everyday – An introduction to the sociologies of the unnoticed* (London: Palgrave MacMillan); Beatrice Hibou (2011) *Anatomie politique de la domination* [The political anatomy of domination] (Paris: La Decouverte), pp. 27-55.
[45] Sandywell, 'The Myth of Everyday Life,' p. 174.
[46] I borrow the concept of 'hybrid' from Haj Yazidha (2010) 'Conceptualizing Hybridity: Deconstructing Boundaries through the Hybrid' In: *Formations* 1(1), pp. 31-38.

formalize actions and conducts into a simplistic binary positing power versus resistance,[47] flattening out the whole range of dynamics that describe social order and social change.[48] It tries instead to reflect on the mutual entanglement that connects power and resistance in a dialogical manner, offering sketches and glimpses of "the mutual ensnarement of rulers and ruled."[49]

2.3.2 The Unfolding of 'Power'

In order to study the everyday as a site where people practice, perceive and experience power, it is important to rely on a set of conceptual tools that take into account the manifold strategies of power by drawing first on Michel Foucault's work on disciplines. This shows how power turns humans into docile bodies that can be categorized, examined and – most importantly – disciplined. It discusses how the rituality and expansiveness of practices of violence are but one strategy of power, which also operates though subtler and more calculated technologies of subjection, disciplining and self-disciplining subjects. It then combines Foucault's insights with other conceptual tools drawn from the work of Sara Ahmed and Slavoj Žižek in order to explore two main points: how emotions – such as fear and suspicion - circulate and arise in relation to disciplinary mechanisms of power, thus further controlling subjects' conducts, and how power does not require subjects to believe firmly in their action, as long as they dissimulate officially such a belief.

Michel Foucault's main interest was to elaborate a notion of power that did not turn into an "underlying essence, a metaphysical notion, or an empty catchall."[50] It is for this reason that he substituted the question of 'what' is power with 'how'[51] power functions, shifting the analysis toward the effects of power through repeated conducts and normalized behaviour. According to Foucault, the first step to take place in order to grasp *how* power operates is to 'cut off the King's head.'[52] It is, thus, fundamental not to assume that the state is the over-all unity of control and domination, rather it is only the terminal form power takes.[53] For him,

[47] Ortner, 'Resistance and the Problem of Ethnographic Refusal,' p. 175.
[48] Deborah Brock, Rebecca Raby, Mark P. Thomas (2011) 'Unpacking the Centre' In: Brock, Raby, Thomas (eds.) *Power and Everyday Practices* (Toronto: Nelson Education), p. 6.
[49] Salwa Ismail (2006) *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: Encountering the Everyday State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), p. xxxv.
[50] Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rainbow (eds) (1982) *Michel Foucault – Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 129.
[51] Michel Foucault, (1982) 'The Subject and Power,' in Dreyfus and Rainbow (eds.) *Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, p. 217.
[52] Michel Foucault (1980) *Power/Knowledge* (Brighton: Harvester), p. 121.
[53] Michel Foucault (1990) *The History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Pantheon Books), pp. 92-93.

power operated as an interrelated 'regime of practices,'[54] a multiplicity of forces – violence being one of them - that support and reverse each other, whose ultimate crystallization is embodied in an institutional apparatus, such as the state.[55] The work of Foucault contributes to the understanding of the everyday in two ways: firstly, it demonstrates that power can function as constraint, negativity, and coercion and secondly, arguing against such repressive hypothesis[56] that equates power to the use of violence, it captures what he defines as 'disciplines.'[57] These disciplines work not as agencies of repression but as mechanisms (*dispositifs*) for constructing docile bodies through observation and examination, thus normalization.[58]

This study particularly draws on Foucault's seminal work '*Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*,' where he introduces the notion of disciplinary power, while examining the work of the jurist-philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, who had drawn an ideal structure of control called the Panopticon.[59] Configured as an institutional building hosting a prison, Foucault argues that the major innovation of the Panopticon consisted in replacing force with visibility as a tool of control and power. By individualizing and placing subjects in a state of constant visibility, the efficiency of the prison was maximized and self-discipline substituted the use of brutal force. The scope of the 'panopticism' was to make prisoners feel constantly observed, yet disenabling them to verify fully whether someone is constantly watching over them.[60] Power did not require intervening directly – i.e. through violence – upon them, rather it induced a process of self-discipline among the prisoners. Foucault traces the emergence of disciplinary power as manifested in prisons, schools and hospitals, showing how its functioning turned subjects into objects of knowledge, whose bodies and behaviours could be trained or modified.[61] As power controls bodies by turning them into objects of knowledge to control and examine, so any objects of knowledge correspond to a certain configuration of power. In this manner, institutions could now control subjects in a preventive manner, supervising them not at the

[54] Michel Foucault (1978) 'A Question of Method' In: Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (eds.) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 75.
[55] Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, pp. 92-93.
[56] Ibid, p. 83.
[57] Michel Foucault (1993) *Sorvegliare e punire: nascita della prigione* [Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison] (Torino: Einaudi), p.149.
[58] "Discipline 'makes' individuals; it is the specific technique of a power that regards individuals both as objects and as instruments of its exercise. It is not a triumphant power [...] it is a modest, suspicious power, which functions as a calculated, but permanent economy." See Ibid, p. 186.
[59] Ibid, pp. 218-219.
[60] Ibid, p. 233.
[61] Maria Los (2004) 'The Technologies of Total Domination' In: *Surveillance & Society* 2:1, pp. 15-38. See also Ismail, *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarter*, pp. 33-65.

level of what they do but of what they might do.[62] Power, thus, operates by normalizing society with surveillance and examination, replacing force and coercion.

Although such an approach captures the new strategies of power in the life of people, its focus on rational and institutional discourses does not take into account how emotions can also function as technologies to govern people. In this regard, the reflections of Sara Ahmed on fear show how emotions are also part of the socio-political environment. She argues that emotions shape bodies as forms of actions and contribute to their alignment and orientation towards other bodies or objects.[63] Fear, in this instance, entails an anticipation of hurt or injury; people fear an object/body that approaches them and project their fear into the future, living the present as an intense bodily experience.[64] This is what Ahmed also calls 'the futurity of fear.'[65] While it restricts bodies in the present, it also disciplines and aligns them in a certain direction toward future possibilities. Fear, thus, functions as another discipline, a technology to govern people and force them to consent to certain conditions of living.[66] It constructs behaviours and social interactions in the everyday life, regulating how bodies orient toward their actions or other bodies and objects.[67]

By describing the role power plays in the everyday life of people as it examines disciplines and orients people, those conceptual tools from Ahmed and Foucault hint to the significance of symbolic authority. However, their interest lies more in the formation of those disciplines than into how people interact with such symbolic parameters, hence the question of belief arises. In this regard, Slavoj Žižek's ideas of *as if* politics[68] contributes to this set of conceptual tools because it takes particularly into account the question of belief vis-à-vis people's everyday practice. Žižek contends that, although subjects can pretend to perform an official, thus required, ritual or action, political institutions, nonetheless, do not require them to endorse their ideological values. In other words, power does not necessarily operate upon *what* people think and believe in order to be legitimate; rather power acquires its force by operating upon *how* people act in the everyday life. What matter is that people keep acting and moving strictly within the set of the dominant symbolical and rhetorical parameters, even if they do so in

[62] Foucault, *Sorvegliare e Punire*, p. 225.
[63] Sara Ahmed (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p. 4.
[64] Ibid, p. 65.
[65] Ibid.
[66] Ibid, p. 71.
[67] See also Corey Robin (2004) *Fear: The History of a Political Idea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).
[68] Slavoj Žižek (1987) *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso), p. 26.

pretence and dissimulation.[69] They should comply with it, and there is no obligation to believe in it, as long as one acts *as if* one believes in it.[70] In this way, the hierarchical order is (re)produced, while subjects fail to act out their grievances, to challenge authority.[71] In a similar manner, Achille Mbembe speaks of regimes of unreality (*regime du simulacre*) in relation to the political situation of many post-colonial African countries.[72] Emerging from the extreme violence of colonialism, Mbembe argues that the main preoccupation of post-colonial states is to guarantee the power of the state through excessive fantasies of grandeur and power, which forces its subordinates to enact numerous official codes and rituals. These conceptual **t**ools permit an understanding of the everyday as a site where power functions in diverse ways and circulates in the everyday life of people: disciplinary rationalities (surveillance), affective orientations (fear) and/or symbolic actions.

The following discussion adds other conceptual tools that inevitably question the capabilities of power to turn the quotidian life of people into a site of total control. By adopting different lenses of investigation, in fact, it is possible to approach the practice of the everyday and capture how people constantly try to manipulate and negotiate the grid of power.

2.3.3 The Unfolding of 'Resistance'

In his work on '*The Practice of the Everyday Life*,' Michel de Certeau argues that the realm of the everyday should be studied as a space "to discover how an entire society resists being reduced to social control, how popular procedures (also 'miniscule' and quotidian) manipulate the mechanisms of discipline and conform to them only in order to evade them."[73] De Certeau critically expands Foucault's understanding of power and disciplinary mechanisms through his focus on resistance. He focuses on "the clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and make-shift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of 'discipline'."[74] In particular, he differentiates between two distinct concepts: *tactics* and *strategies*. While the latter are institutional ways of doing and operating that aim to control dimensions of time and

[69] Ibid.
[70] Ibid, p. 19.
[71] For an application of Zizek's ideas to other political contexts, see also Lisa Wedeen (1999) *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press).
[72] Achille Mbembe (2001) *On the Postcolony* (Berkley: University of California Press), p. 129.
[73] Michel de Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkley: University of California Press), p. xiv.
[74] Ibid.

place, thus belong to the sphere of the powerful; a tactic is "an art of the weak."[75] Tactics rely on the unpredictability of institutionalized time, they exploit changes in the organization of space and thus arise from strategies' failure to control. In particular, de Certeau discusses the notion of consumer, which refers to the capacity of a subject to operate and consume within the dominant order. He claims that consumption, as a mode of behaviour, does not manifest "itself through its own products, but rather through its ways of using the products."[76] Since the practice determines the meanings associated to the products, it is important to analyze those shifting patterns, ways of using. In other words, one needs to examine "the difference or similarity between the production of the image and the secondary production hidden in the process of its utilization."[77] It is the study of those discrepancies between dominant codes and more creative, silent practices that captures the role of resistance in the everyday life of people.

De Certeau's approach resonates in the work of James C. Scott. Scott distinguishes between two types of performances in the everyday life of people vis-à-vis power, what he terms *public* and *hidden* transcripts of power. There are the *public transcripts* that take place out in the open and are in the interests of the subordinates because they imitate power in a more or less credible manner.[78] However, there are also *hidden transcripts*, those actions taking place 'offstage,' beyond direct observation by power-holders, that consist of "speeches, gestures, and practices that conform, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript […] produced for a different audience and under different constraints of power than the public transcripts."[79] According to Scott, the study of the *hidden transcripts* entails the task of capturing those down-to-earth, low profiles, behind-the-scenes stratagems and tactics that purposely do not want to come to the fore. They remain hidden from the staging of public power and they constantly test the limits of what is possible within a certain political regime, pressing "against the limit of what is permitted on stage, much as a body of water might press against a dam. The amount of pressure naturally varies with the degree of shared anger and indignation experienced by subordinates."[80] For Scott, the actions of subordinates are much more relevant because they constitute the realm of *infrapolitics*'; a sphere of circumspect struggle waged daily by subordinate groups, trying to maintain their invisibility vis-à-vis the public power.

[75] Ibid, p. 38
[76] Ibid, p. 475.
[77] Ibid, p. 476.
[78] James C. Scott (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (London: Yale University Press), p. 4.
[79] Ibid, pp. 4-5.
[80] Ibid, p. 196.

Among the actions that Scott stresses is popular culture (humour, satire, trickster, etc).[81] Popular culture can mock the fictitious grounds of official codes, unveiling the discrepancy between public and hidden transcripts of power or twist upside-down the existing conditions of ordinary life.[82] In a similar vein, Mbembe reflects on the uses of humour in post-colonial African and argues that humour, in particular, contains a large dose of vulgarity in those political contexts where power requires people to enact numerous rituals in order to celebrate the cult of leaders, what he calls excesses (or *fetish*).[83] Since those official codes create a situation where everybody is forced to live in a constant state of dissimulation (*regime du simulacre*),[84] then postcolonial subjects are *homo ludens* par excellence.[85] They are men constantly at play with their splitting identities who, as much as they can dissimulate adherence to official codes of fetishized grandeur, so they muster a talent for play. For both Scott and de Certeau, all those acts of trickery and creative manipulation of power are crucial to study because they capture those down-to-earth, low-profile, behind-the-scenes stratagems and tactics that purposely do not want to come to the fore. They remain hidden from the staging of public power and, more importantly, they test constantly the limits of what is possible within a certain political structure.

Such concepts are crucial because they make an invaluable contribution to the study of the practice of everyday life, showing how mundane actions can be a site for identifying resistance to power. The juxtaposition of de Certeau's concept of 'tactics' to Foucault's 'disciplinary mechanisms,' on the one hand, points out the shifting grounds of power, which appeared to be all the more pervasive and capillary according to the latter. Scott, on the other hand, emphasises the importance of conceiving power as a split performance: staged in public and betrayed in secret. The strict focus of those concepts on everyday actions and conducts, however, undervalues how the tension between power and resistance also emerges in relation to people's quotidian desires and emotions. While people often do not act out their desires, the latter nonetheless reveal how people relate to existing structures of power, for instance, in moments of political uncertainty and crisis.[86] Similar to quotidian actions, everyday affective and

[81] Ibid, p. 156.
[82] Ibid, p. 166.
[83] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, pp. 103-104.
[84] Ibid, p. 108.
[85] Ibid.
[86] See Nauja Kleist & Stef Jansen (eds.) (2016) 'Hope over Time: Crisis, Immobility and Future-making' In: *Journal of History and Anthropology* 27:4.

emotional states can also be used to either regulate or challenge the status quo.

For these reasons, this conceptual framework also interacts with the work of Sara Ahmed[87] and Lauren Berlant to examine how people imagine and orient their desires and happiness vis-à-vis the future, and how those affective states interacts with future possibilities, orienting actions and shaping bodies.[88]Ahmed suggests that: "happiness operates as a *futurity*, as something that is hoped for; creating a political and personal horizon that gives us an image of the good life."[89] In other words, to think that something promises happiness entails the imagination of those 'good' things that would follow in receiving it. The promise, thus, of happiness moves and orients people and their mundane actions. Along this vein, in '*Cruel Optimism*' Lauren Berlant claims that those attachments one develops toward certain objects reveal less about the objects per se than the 'cluster of promises and desires'[90] one can manage to keep magnetized to them. Whether they are a subject, an object or an institution, what her approach assumes is how those elements act as foundations for optimism, thus orienting and moving people toward ideals of 'the good life.'

Although this concept shares similarity with Ahmed's approach to happiness, Berlant also reflects on to what extent those fantasies of 'optimism' can be damaging for a subject. She challenges under what conditions people endure an attachment to certain clusters of promises and desires, despite the fact that those same attachments impede the achievement of those imagined promises. *Cruel optimism*, as she defines it, is a concept that helps us explain how "being incoherent in relation to desire does not impede the subject's capacity to live on, but might actually, at the same time, protect it."[91] In this sense, fantasies of happiness and the good life, on the one hand, can contest the political status quo because they reveal what people hope

[87] For a thorough exploration of Sara Ahmed's work on happiness, see Sara Ahmed (2010) *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press).
[88] For the governmentality of affective components and government's reliance on policies of well-being, see also William Davies (2015) *The Happiness Industry: How the Government and Big Business Sold us Well-Being* (London: Verso Books); and Deirdre Duffy (2017) 'Get on Your Feet, Get Happy: Happiness and the Affective Governing of Young People in the Age of Austerity' In: Peter Kelly and Jo Pike (eds.) *Neoliberalism and Austerity: The Moral Economies of Young People's Health and Wellbeing* (London: MacMillan), p. 90.
[89] Ahmed (2007/8) 'The Happiness Turn' In: *New Formations* 63:1, p. 12 (my emphasis). The whole Special Issue of *New Formations* is dedicated to a questioning of 'happiness studies' via queer, anthropological and political lenses.
[90] Laurent Berlant (2011) *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press), p. 23.
[91] Ibid, p. 16.

for and what alternative political horizons they attach to meanings of the good life. [92] On the other hand, these same fantasies also regulate the present quotidian life as they create possibilities for governing people's conducts in the present. At times, it is the government and its political promises for the future that can orient the aspirations of subjects' agency, while avoiding to (re)address those present inequalities that hinder the lives of people.[93] At other times, it is these attachments to certain elements that impede the achievement of those clusters of hopes, promises and desires.

This conceptual frame underpins the analysis of the study in order to interpret the mundane, quotidian and ordinary actions of people vis-à-vis power and capture the dynamics of power and resistance during the period of al-Jamāhīrīyah. It also enables us to recognize how power operates and is (re)produced through surveillance, fear and dissimulation, orienting and disciplining people's bodies in their everyday life while, simultaneously, examining the everyday as a site of constant resistance to power, questioning whether the role of conscious defiance in the ordinary actions of people is over-emphasized. Without abandoning the ambiguity of the realm of the everyday, these conceptual tools inform the analysis of everyday practice and navigates its ambivalences, avoiding pinning the everyday down to clear-cut definitions and borders. They map out how the practice of the everyday contains a certain double-ness, an inherent contradiction that is in constant flux. By tracing general patterns of everyday practice that offer a nuanced picture of the diverse sketches of Libya under al-Jamāhīrīyah, the study aims to focus attention also on the conceptual issues surrounding power and resistance in everyday life.

2.4 Conclusion

The discussion above showed the limitation of the studies associated with an approach to the study of power in al-Jamāhīrīyah that focuses on variations of the theme of 'statelessness;' identifying a lack of political structures and over-emphasising the role, ideas and speeches of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi. This approach, thus, condenses the conception of power into one-man,

[92] The work of Edward Fischer also investigates happiness and good life along these lines of inquiry. See Edward F. Fischer (2014) *The Good Life: Aspiration, Dignity, and the Anthropology of Wellbeing* (Stanford: Stanford University Press).
[93] Lisa Wedeen discusses how ideas of the 'good life' fostered protests and quelled dissent in Syria in 2011. See Wedeen (2013) 'Ideology and Humor in Dark Times: Notes from Syria' In: *Critical Inquiry* 39, pp. 843-873.

while triggering the disappearance of the Libyan people from the dynamics of state-society. Other socio-political approaches move away from 'statelessness' and relies on alternative theoretical bases that permit the investigation of al-Jamāhīrīyah 'from below.' They examine a bit more closely what role Libyans played vis-à-vis the changing policies and tactics of al-Jamāhīrīyah regime. Following such a direction, this study expands on those works by emphasising the role of 'practice' in the everyday life of Libyans.

Reviewing this current state of the art on al-Jamāhīrīyah allowed the identification of the research gap and the main question of this study, namely, 'How is power practiced, experienced, complied with and/or resisted in the everyday life under al-Jamāhīrīyah?' Taking the issue of the everyday as the central point of the study, the chapter develops the conceptual frame with its specific set of conceptual tools that underpins the analysis of the collected data. These tools facilitate the capturing of the manifold and diverse directions of the practice of the everyday life and the inherent dynamics of power and resistance.

The following chapter elaborates on the methodology adopted by the study and the method of data collection and analysis.

3. Methodological Approach to the Study of the Everyday

Having identified the research gap, developed the main research question and outlined the conceptual frame of the study, it is crucial to explain the chosen methodology for the collection of primary data and its evaluation. This chapter, thus, elaborates, firstly, on the research paradigm that guides this study, determining the choice of the research method, the process of data collection as well as the method of analysis. In this endeavor the chapter presents a research paradigm whose particular approach to social reality stemmed from the identified aim to explore the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah from the perspective of Libyans. Secondly, it outlines the dynamics that emerged through the process of collecting the data and their impact on the positionality of the researcher vis-à-vis interviewees. It examines how interviewees perceived the nature of this study in light of the events in 2011 that brought to the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah. Finally, it reflects on both the limitations imposed by the political environment in Libya at the time of the research and the sensitivity of the topic in light of the ongoing civil war. It also discusses the limitations and ethical issues encountered, how these were confronted and the compromises that had to be made in the process.

3.1 Research Design

The previous chapter (Chapter 2 Section 1) demonstrated how most academic studies on the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah condense the notion of power into Qadhdhafi's figure, ideas and institutional decisions, triggering the disappearance of people from the history of their own country. The main objective of this research, consequently, was to analyse how power, as a socio-cultural process, is shaped and negotiated in the everyday life, thus regaining the subjective experiences of Libyans. This research, in so doing, proceeds from an understanding of reality and knowledge that are usually defined as *constructivist* ontology and *interpretive* epistemology. This study is not concerned with knowledge as an external, independent, objective and 'out there' reality.[1] By examining how people experience and perceive power in the everyday life, it approaches social phenomena as continually being accomplished by social actors through interaction, whose meanings are in a constant state of revision.[2] The knowledge sought fits the interpretive social science paradigm, which takes "at its fundamental subject matter the everyday life world, as that world is taken for granted and made problematic by self-

[1] John Searle (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality* (London: Penguin).
[2] Alan Bryman (2012) *Social Research Methods: 4th Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 33.

reflective, interacting individuals." [3] The study aims to draw conclusions from how people experience and impute meaning, motive, intention, emotion, and feeling. This is precisely what this research is attempting to do: reach an objective comprehension of power and resistance through the subjective experience of Libyans [4] and the streams of situations which they construct, give meaning to, and inhabit. In this regard, this research adopts the inductive[5] technique of reasoning that, as Alan Bryman contends**,** involves "drawing generalizable inferences out of observations."[6] This technique requires the researcher to gather data through observation, then create and consolidate meaning by creating categories and themes.[7] This process ends with the formulation of generalisation or theory development, thus creating knowledge on the researched topic.

3.2 Oral Histories or Narratives

To achieve that, the study uses interviews or what I call 'oral histories/narratives' as the primary research method in order to reveal these narratives. Oral histories or narratives were collected through in-depth, semi-structured interviews that included biographic elements. Although they were not fully biographic interviews, they inevitably contained elements that connected and bridged subjective experiences of everyday life to what is usually deemed as social 'history.' Oral histories slightly differ from in-depth interviews because the former "allows you to study a long period of a person's life or even their entire life […] how people have experienced historical events of import."[8] Oral histories and narratives are forms of oral discourse through which both researcher (interviewer) and interviewees search for a connection between biography and social history, between subjective experience and the transformations of society.[9] In this manner, a narrative becomes a way to reconstruct a certain event, to recreate the puzzle of memories in order to articulate them in a signifying chain.

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[3] Norman K. Denzin (2006) 'Interpretive Interactionism' In: Malcom Williams (ed.) *Philosophical Foundations of Social Research Methods: Volume I* (London: SAGE), p. 201.
[4] David J. Nightingale & John Cromby (2006) 'Social Constructionism as Ontology: Exposition and Example' In: Williams (ed) *Philosophical Foundations of Social Research: Volume III* (London: SAGE), pp. 117-30.
[5] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p. 24.
[6] Ibid.
[7] Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell (eds.) (2016) *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation, 4th Edition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), p. 201.
[8] Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (2005) 'Oral History: A Collaborative Method of (Auto)Biography Interview' In: N. S. Hesse-Biber and Patricia Leavy, *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (London: SAGE), pp. 150-151.
[9] Alessandro Portelli (1997) *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press) and Paul Atkinson & Sara Delamont (eds.) (2006) *Narrative Methods: Volume I*

The importance of oral sources and, in particular, histories lies in how they are too often considered to contradict the rational spirit that characterizes the written form: "There seems to be a fear that once the floodgates of orality are opened, writing (and rationality along with it) may be swept out as if by a spontaneous uncontrollable mass of fluid, irrational material."[10] However, oral sources maintain specific characteristics and functions, whose use should be privileged according to the research study. On the one hand, writing is a form of control and transcription of sources, thus it mostly is a form of power for controlling the narration of events. On the other hand, oral sources are less fundamental for the history of the ruling class, "who have had control over writing and so entrusted most of their collective memory to written records."[11] They are instead a necessary, if not sufficient, condition for a history of the non-hegemonic classes.[12] For this reason, this study was mainly pursued through the collection of oral histories of people, since their voices are less hegemonic if compared to those studies relying on Qadhdhafi's ideas and speeches.

Several questions arise in relation to the credibility, objectivity and truthfulness of this research method because interpretation is a purely subjective process or, as Edward Bruner also contends: "Every telling is an arbitrary imposition of meaning on the flow of memory […] every telling is interpretive."[13] What concerns oral narratives, however, is how these subjective experiences create knowledge in relation to existing power structures, while recounting quotidian anecdotes from the past. Oral sources possess a different 'credibility,' their diversity "consists in the fact that 'untrue' statements are still psychologically 'true,' and that previous 'errors' sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts."[14] In this regard, there existed a certain recurrence of 'mythological,'[15] collective and 'conspiratorial' narratives throughout the interviews, which could easily be dismissed as 'untrue.'[16] For instance, it did not matter

(London: SAGE); Marta Kurkowska-Budzan and Krzystof Zamorski (eds.) (2009) *Oral History: The challenges of dialogue* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company).

[10] Alessandro Portelli (1981) 'The Pecularities of Oral History' In: *History Workshop Journal* 12:1, p. 97.

[11] Ibid, p. 104.

[12] For the achievements of oral histories as a research method that allowed to give voice to alternative narratives of social history, see Paul Thompson with Joanna Bornat (2017) *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 140-187.

[13] Edward M. Bruner (1986) 'Experience and Its Expressions' In: Victor M. Bruner & Edward M. Bruner (eds.) *The Anthropology of Experience* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press), p. 7.

[14] Portelli, The Pecularities of Oral History, p. 100. See also Renato Rosaldo (1989) *Culture and Truth: The remaking of social analysis* (Boston: Beacon Press), p. xviii.

[15] See Margaret Hiley (2004) 'Stoken Language, Cosmic Models: Myth and Mythology in Tolkine' In: *Modern Fiction Studies* 50:4, pp. 838-860; James Clapperton (2006) *The Siege of Leningrad and The Ambivalence of the Sacred: Conversations with Survivors* (PhD unpublished thesis: University of Edinburgh).

[16] Karin Stogner (2009) 'Life story interviews and the 'Truth of Memory': Some aspects of oral history from a historico-philosophical perspective' In: Kurkowska-Budzan and Zamorski (eds.) *Oral History: The challenges of dialogue,* pp. 205-215.

how real certain stories about the actions of Qadhdhafi were, it was the act of recounting those stories that unveiled the importance of his cult of personality in Libyan society (see Chapter 6 Section 1). As Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern argue, rumours and gossip possess an interpretive ambiguity that functions "either to spread undue alarm or to help people survive."[17] In his work on 'conspiracism,' Matthew Gray also shows how many Arab states – in the form of leaders, institutions and state-owned media – actively promote conspiracism when it comes to explanations of political events.[18] In other words, those 'surreal' narratives also participate in the dynamics of power and resistance[19] and thus provided remarkable insights in the political history of Libya during al-Jamāhīrīyah. Together with such performative styles of narration, relevant concerns for the interviews also emerged in relation to the question of memory and suspicion, which reflected the political volatility characterizing Libya at the time of the research and the positionality of the researcher. Before discussing how such issues were confronted, it is necessary to outline the manner of carrying out the study providing a detailed overview of how and where the interviews took place.

3.3 Data Collection and Limitations

I encountered the interviewees in England and Italy, with the exception of those who were interviewed via Skype and resided in Egypt or the United States. I had 66 interviews (only 41 were digitally recorded) during a period of 8 months, starting in February 2015 and ending the subsequent September.[20] I met Libyans between 20 and 60 years old, mostly men with the exception of four women, who had started residing abroad only after the events in 2011. They were working or studying, either learning English or pursuing an academic degree in the form of an undergraduate or graduate program, i.e. BA, MA or DPhil. It is possible to affirm that those interviewees who were also attending a graduate program, and thus were acquainted with the procedures of academic research, facilitated the interviewing process. I started encountering interviewees in England and, particularly, at Durham University, establishing contacts with

[17] Pamela Stewart and Andrew Strathern (2004) *Witchcraft, Sorcery, Rumors and Gossip* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), p. 30.
[18] Matthew Gray (2010) *Conspiracy Theories in the Arab World: Sources and Politics* (New York: Routledge), p. 118.
[19] There are other works on conspiratorial narratives and their relations to dominant power structures, see Jodi Dean (1998) *Aliens In America: Conspiracy Cultures from Outerspace to Cyberspace* (New York: Cornell University Press); Slavoj Žižek (1999) *The Matrix or, the Two Sides of Perversion*, available online at: http://www.lacan.com/zizek-matrix.htm (access date: 25 July 2015).
[20] See Appendix A for a detailed list of how many and where interviews were conducted.

those Libyan nationals who were pursuing an academic degree. The importance of those first contacts was central because they functioned as 'gate-openers,' activating a so-called process of snowballing[21] that put me in contact with other Libyan nationals among their acquaintances. I travelled throughout several cities in England, such as Huddersfield, Hull, Manchester, Nottingham, Reading, Sheffield and Newcastle. Certain cities were visited multiple times because of a close relationship that had been established with the interviewees. The one-month research period in Italy was facilitated by Anna Baldinetti, author of '*Origins of the Libyan Nation: Colonial Legacy, Exile and the Emergence of a New Nation-State*'[22] and Professor of Political Science at the University of Perugia. Her role was crucial for introducing me to the Libyan nationals studying at the University for Foreigners of Perugia.

The interviewees were carried out mostly in English and Italian, as well as Arabic. While the researcher's level of Arabic (intermediate) did not allow carrying out a full interview, it was still used to collect jokes and vernacular expressions. The interviewees took place in public places, such as universities, cafés, and restaurants. There were also opportunities for collective meetings, dinners and gatherings in domestic environments, which only took place after a good trust-relation had been established. Personal meetings seemed more appropriate because they allowed more in-depth conversation, offering the possibility to unpack questions or delve into detailed discussions. The length of the interview always depended on the willingness of the interviewee and the organization of the same interviews. They usually lasted from a minimum of thirty minutes to a maximum of three hours. At times,[23] my initial contact would arrange four or five interviews to take place consequently, thus I could not talk at length. I also collected the phone number or email address of some interviewees (35 in total) to remain in contact and discuss relevant research-related or contemporary political issues. This process enabled me to gather further details about their everyday lives due to a growing trust between us. I tried to contact them via phone or email[24] in order to observe whether certain opinions seemed to change as events unfolded in Libya. Also, I visited three times a group of 8 interviewees in Hull, two times a group of 4 interviewees in Nottingham and two times the group of interviewees in Italy (July and August 2015). I also opted for the use of Skype and Viber for

[21] Neuman, *Social Research Methods,* pp. 267-268 and Alan Bryman (2012) *Social Research Methods: 4th Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), p. 424.
[22] Anna Baldinetti (2009) *Origins of the Libyan Nation: Colonial Legacy, Exile and the Emergence of a New Nation-State* (London: Routledge).
[23] This took place in Nottingham, Huddersfield and Reading.
[24] Those interviewees resided in Hull, Huddersfield, Nottingham, Reading and Perugia.

carrying out interviewees (3 in total) with Libyan nationals who were interested in the research study but unavailable to meet in person (two in Egypt and one in the US).

To undertake the process of data collection outside Libya also is a symptom of the major limitation of this research: the impossibility of carrying it out in Libya due to the intense political instability that developed since 2011. Since the start of the protests and the subsequent civil war, Libya has witnessed an ongoing period of growing instability that affected its security conditions. At the beginning of the doctoral degree in 2014, efforts were made to establish contacts with Libyan nationals in the country. However, in light of the research topic engaging heavily with a recent period of the political history of the country, whose contested nature remained at the core of the military escalation, it was decided to seek alternative measures after recommendations from UK Home Office and discussions with supervisors. Such instability influenced the reliance on one specific research method, semi-structured interviews, and did not permit to explore the same topic with other methods, such as ethnography or consultation of archival materials in Libya. At the same time, such a limitation also provided an invaluable chance for interviewees to reflect on the past political history of their country by going beyond the imposing and dividing logic of the civil war – meaning: pro-government vs revolutionaries (see also below, Section 3.4.2). While this research took place among Libyans living abroad, the interviewees do not fall into the category of 'exile' and 'diaspora,' which is understood as the dispersal of people from their original homeland.[25] None of these terms recurred during my interviews, and words like 'refugees' or 'exile' were never used, since none of the interviewees identified themselves in that category.

Two other research limitations concern the sample of the interviewees. As my pool came out from Libyans residing abroad, it was not possible to determine the economic background of the interviewees. Unless such details emerged spontaneously during the interview, direct questions on the economic status of the interviewee were not asked as they appeared overly intrusive and could compromise trust in the researcher. The second limitation appeared in relation to the gender balance of the sample. Being a male researcher granted me the opportunity to interact only with male interviewees (60), apart from three female interviewees. The majority of the male interviewees not only passed on my contact details to other male friends of theirs and/or relatives, but also appeared reluctant to have a male-stranger interview their female

[25] See Kim D. Butler (2001) Defining Diaspora, Refining a Discourse In: *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* 10:2, pp. 189-219.

relatives or wives. For instance, it was particularly emblematic how Ismail answered when I asked whether the everyday life of women, and their opinions, differed: "There is no need to talk to my wife, I know what she thinks. Just ask me."[26] Such an attitude neither encouraged nor facilitated access to female interviewees. Nonetheless, the empirical richness of the research evolved in relation to those male interviewees with whom a process of bonding and trust was easily established. For example, it allowed the researcher to be in constant contact with some interviewees and gain access to their private spaces and informal settings, such as the organization of gatherings and dinners where numerous stories were recounted and meals were cooked within a typical Libyan sphere, albeit male-dominated.

Lastly, another limitation concerns the process of snowballing and the geographical origin of the interviewees. In the aftermath of the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah, political divisions also surfaced along geographical lines, as the current division of Libya in two governments 'West versus East' testifies. I was preoccupied that the process of snowballing would only allow me to get in touch with the interviewees' acquaintances who were all coming from a certain city and shared a very similar political view of al-Jamāhīrīyah. For these reasons, this study tried to locate a pool of interviewees coming from as many cities in Libya as possible[27] in order to avoid replicating those geographical/political divisions that appeared particularly relevant within the logic of the post-2011 civil war.

3.4 The Researcher's Positionality

'Why are you interested in Libya?' 'Why are you studying Libya?'

At the end or at the start of an interview many interviewees raised such questions. Although they seem relatively innocuous, they became even more uncomfortable when interviewees wondered whether my focus on Libya stemmed from a connection between myself being Italian and Libya being a former Italian colony. My answer would clarify that such an interest sparked from an initial engagement with the ideas of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi, who was often mocked and represented as 'mad' in Western political and media circles. In fact, during my MA program I studied how Qadhdhafi rose to power in 1969 and, because of the events that brought the fall

[26] Field-notes, Ismail, 32 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[27] Interviewees came from all these cities: Benghazi, Tripoli, Misrata, Khums, Sebha, Bani Walid, Tobruk, Al-Bayda, Zintan, Darnah, Ghat, Adjabiya).

of al-Jamāhīrīyah in 2011, I started wondering how Libyans related to his policies and ideas. Although there was no clear intention or connection to the Italian colonial past, interviewees' questions inevitably made me confront how choosing a research topic is never a neutral decision.[28] Such decisions also relate to dominant discourses and structures of power, in which the researcher – and so the interviewees - take part.[29] In other words, the choice of a research topic is also an act of power.[30]

This is particularly relevant for all those academic studies interacting with the Middle East,[31] whose actual creation as both geographical region and field of study remains a recent colonial invention.[32] When Western researchers approach the study of the Arab 'Other' without reflecting on how their studies interact with dominant structures of power, there can be a latent risk that their analyses end up reproducing structures of oppression, continuing to empower the former and oppressing the latter. Several scholars reflected on such power-knowledge relationship. For instance, in his work '*Orientalism*' Edward Said pointed out how 18th and 19th century 'Western' literary writings about the Orient revealed a certain racist attitude and ontological arrogance. They reproduced ideals of annihilation and control of those same 'Oriental' populations, thus stabilizing 'Western' colonial goals and visions.[33] In more recent times, following the numerous protests in the region since 2011, Mona Abaza remarked how Egypt had become a place of intellectual tourism, where "local academics have often been

[28] For diverse discussions and definitions of reflexivity in the process of 'co-constituted' research or research as a 'process' see Kim V. England (1994) Getting Personal: Reflexivity, Positionality and Feminist Research In: *The Professional Geographer* 46:1, pp. 80-89; Linda Finlay (2002) 'Outing' the Researcher: The Provenance, Process, and Practice of Reflexivity In: *Qualitative Health Research* 12:4, pp. 531-545; Marylis Guilleim and Lynn Gillam (2004) Ethics, Reflexivity and 'Ethically Important Moments' in Research In: *Qualitative Inquiry* 10:2, pp. 261-280.

[29] See also Denzin and Giardina**,** *Qualitative Inquiry and the Politics of Research.*

[30] See also Jillian Schwedler (2014) 'Toward Transparency in the Ethics of Knowledge Production' In: POMEPS (Project on Middle East Political Science) (2014) *The Ethics of Research in Middle East Studies - Studies 8*, p. 23. Available online at: http://pomeps.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/POMEPS_Studies_8_Ethics.pdf (access date: 20 July 2017).

[31] This argument is as valid as for other research fields, see Brooke Ackerly and Jacqui True (2008) Reflexivity in Practice: Power and Ethics in Feminist Research on International Relations In: *International Studies Review* 10:4, pp. 693-707. Jenny Edkins (2005), 'Ethics and Practices of Engagement: Intellectuals as Experts', *International Relations*, 19(1), pp. 65–66.

[32] See David Fromkin (2001) *A Peace to End All Peace: The Fall of the Ottoman Empire and the Creation of the Modern Middle East* (New York: Owl Books). Zachary Lockman (2009) *Contending Visions of the Middle East: The History and Politics of Orientalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press) and (2016) *Field Notes: The Making of Middle East Studies in the United States* (Stanford: Stanford University Press); Osama F. Khalil (2016) *America's Dream Palace: Middle East Expertise and the Rise of the National Security State* (Harvard: Harvard University Press).

[33] According to Sadiq Jalal al-Aqm, Said essentialized 'the West,' reinforcing a stark division between East and West, which he initially promised to deconstruct throughout his work. See more in Sadiq Jalal al-Aqm (1980) *Orientalism and Orientalism in Reverse*, available at: http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article20360 (access date: 29 October 2015).

reduced to service providers for Western 'experts' who jet in and jet out."[34] However, to turn the theory of Orientalism into a dogma is also problematic because it depicts research interactions "either as [solely] determined by power and domination or, alternatively, as taking place in the [complete] absence of power and domination." [35]

These reflections are significant in terms of raising ethical questions, examining the field and the structures in which research practices take place, and thus the positionality of the researcher. It is, nonetheless, important to note that there are no easy and straightforward answers that explain how a study should interrelate or challenge dominant structures of power.[36] What is most consequential for researchers is being capable to turn their gaze inward, to maintain a capacity to think reflexively about their own positionality within the broader context in which research practices are embedded. They need to ponder how their positionality can affect their relations with interviewees or how other people and/or organizations can use the findings. In this manner, there exists the possibility not to perpetuate: firstly, colonial relations of domination, where Western thinkers and scholars remain pervasively as the 'knowing subjects,' while non-Western 'Others' continue to be the objects of their observations and analyses and secondly, produce a knowledge that can acknowledge its relationality and still aim for truth-claims.

This section discusses two main and interrelated issues this study confronted, forcing the researcher to call into question his own positionality during the course of the interviews and meetings with the interviewees: encountering suspicion and being in-between 'both sides.'

3.4.1 Encountering Suspicion

> A: You are Italian and you study in Durham about Libya. Well, you easily could be from the secret services (*mukhābarāt*).
>
> M: But, my friend, I just told you that I am not and I am having so many problems to let people trust me.

[34] Mona Abaza (2011) 'Academic Tourists Sight-seeing the Arab Spring,' In: *AhramOnline*, available online at: http://english.ahram.org.eg/News/22373.aspx (access date: 20 July 2017).
[35] John Borneman and Abdellah Hammoudi (2009) 'The Fieldwork Encounter, Experience, and the Making of Truth: An Introduction' In: J. Borneman and A. Hammoudi, *Being There: The Fieldwork Encounter and the Making of Truth* (Berkley: University of California).
[36] Sheila Carapico (2006) 'No Easy Answers: The Ethics of Field Research in the Arab World' In: *Political Science & Politics* 39:3, pp. 429-431.

> A: It does not matter if you – yourself – are from the secret services, but your research could be used by them. Anyway, I do not care about all this … CIA, MI6 … if they needed to know something about me, I am sure they already know everything. So, what do you want to ask me?[37]

The conversation I had in Sheffield with Ahmed captures one of the main recurrent concerns interviewees had toward the role of the researcher and the use of the research findings. There was a sense of suspicion and fear that I could belong to the secret services (*mukhābarāt*), working either for the British or Italian government.[38] At times, despite assurances of their willingness to be interviewed, they would neither answer to my calls nor show up for the interview. The first form of power/resistance encountered in this research was the suspicion toward a Western researcher working on the politics of Libya. In another instance, while I was staying in Perugia, Nuri – an interviewee whom I had met in England - put me in contact through Viber with Omar who gained his doctoral degree in Italy and knew very well many of the Libyan nationals in Perugia. Speaking with Omar on the phone, I shared my concerns in relation to the difficulties to interact with them. So, he told me:

> I spoke with one of them on the phone and there is someone who believes you are from the intelligence. I know it is stupid to have such ideas, but you need to understand their fears now. You know, the situation is not good in Libya.[39]

A similar situation occurred when I visited the city of Manchester, which hosts the biggest Libyan community in England and represented a core centre of various exiled political opposition groups during al-Jamāhīrīyah period. In Manchester, I struggled to establish contacts in Manchester and I often scheduled appointments on the phone with interviewees who never showed up or disappeared completely, i.e. they deleted or blocked me from Viber or WhatsApp and/or avoided answering my follow-up calls. Many interviewees from Manchester exhibited a suspicious attitude toward a Western researcher working on Libyan politics, whose positionality contains and risks to reproduce structural unbalances of power, as shown above. However, there existed also other factors. For instance, Rabee suggested that

[37] Author Interview, Ahmed, 53 years old, Sheffield, August 2015.
[38] Other scholars reflect on the role of suspicion during field research, see Sally Falk Moore (2009) 'Encounter and Suspicion in Tanzania' and John Borneman 'Fieldwork Experience, Collaboration, and Interlocution: The 'Metaphysics of Presence' in Encounters with the Syrian Mukhabarat' In: J. Borneman and A. Hammoudi (eds.) *Being There: The Fieldwork Encounter and the Making of Truth*, p. 151-182, 237-258; and Carolyn Nordstrom and Antonius C.G.M. Robben (eds.) (1995) *Fieldwork under fire: contemporary studies of violence and survival* (Berkley: University of California Press).
[39] Author Interview, Omar, 32 years old, Italy, July 2015.

suspicion was an expression of fear, and it stemmed from the relatively less-educated background of those Libyans residing in Manchester:

> Most of these people are taxi drivers or they work in pizza shops, they do not understand what you are doing. They never studied and they are afraid, it's the Libyan mentality.[40]

What Rabee describes as 'Libyan mentality' refers to a sense of surveillance and mistrust that seemed to be widespread in Libyan society during al-Jamāhīrīyah, where to speak politics could trigger dangerous consequences (see Chapter 5), so the situation continued nowadays despite its fall in 2011. Also, some of the interviewees appeared careful in offering their own narrative of the past, since memory can be used to justify the claims, errors and choices, of the present. As Steven Knapp also argues: "the locus of the authority is always in the present: we use, for promoting and reinforcing ethical and political dispositions, only those elements of the past that correspond to our sense of what presently compels us."[41]

Suspicion resulting from my positionality as an Italian researcher working in an English institution exposed me further to the structural conditions of power in which research practices are both embedded and perceived. This suspicion towards the positionality of a Western researcher comes in light of the destructive presence of Western colonial past and present history in the Middle East region. Suspicion, also, meant fear of exposing one's political opinions over a past period that remains a much-contested object of struggle in the present. For these reasons, interviewees often felt uncomfortable when I asked to record their interview because to record often meant to give birth to an official copy of their words. In this regard, I proceeded very carefully providing a detailed explanation of the research topic, as well as presenting my institutional details via business cards and Durham institutional channels, i.e. university email address or website. At the time of the interview, I would recap such details and show a consent form from Durham University. Most importantly, I used to ask only after several minutes into the interview whether I could start using the recorder and, when the answer was negative, I would continue taking notes. These precautions were not always successful and, when they were, another dynamic emerged, what I call being in-between 'both sides.'

[40] Author Interview, Basher, 31 years old, Durham, September 2015.
[41] Steven Knapp (1989) Collective Memory and the Actual Past In: *Representations* 26, p. 131.

3.4.2 In-Between 'Both Sides'

Since the first interviews, it was easy to realize how inquiring about quotidian aspects of life – 'Did you ever read the Green Book?' 'When was the first time?' 'Did you ever participate to the al-Fatḥ anniversary?' or 'What was your job?'[42] - was politically contested. More importantly, I came across an interesting phenomenon with all interviewees: to ask about the past always brought them to compare the Libyan everyday life before and after 2011, and such evaluations appeared inevitable. These questions triggered an evaluation of the past, whose political nature remains contested in the present. It was hard to decipher whether the turbulent present was haunting and blocking a narration of an obscure past or vice versa,[43] triggering 'politics of victimisation and regret'[44] or nostalgic vision.[45] According to John Keane, "crisis periods […] prompt awareness of the crucial political importance of the past for the present. As a rule, crises are times during which the living do battle for the hearts, minds and souls of the dead."[46] Due to the recurrence of such comparisons, I decided to start off interviews by asking to elaborate on the expectedness of the 2011 events, as this seemed to be a more comfortable way for moving later to the realm of the everyday under al-Jamāhīrīyah. To be in-between 'both sides'[47] meant realizing how to occupy a position that did not clearly support the vision of either 'pro-government' or 'revolutionaries.' It meant acknowledging how interviewees understood this study as a way to convince the researcher of their point of view over what had happened in 2011, turning interviews into a means to express their political opinions over the highly contested nature of those events.

In such a situation, the researcher needs to remain aware of how relevant certain dynamics are and how they can play out in the research process. For instance, the positionality of the researcher as 'outsider' allowed me to challenge interviewees and their assumptions toward the dividing logic of the post-2011 events. While to undertake the process of data collection

[42] The initial list of questions, which received the ethical approval of my department, functioned as footprint for my interviews. However, the emergence of themes that were initially excluded raised new questions, which were not updated in the written form, see Appendix B: Sample of Asked Questions.
[43] Michael Schudson (1989) 'The Past in the Present versus the Present in the Past' In: *Communication* 11, p. 113 (pp. 105-113).
[44] Jeffrey Olick (2007) *The Politics of Regret: On Collective Memory and Historical Responsibility* (New York: Routledge).
[45] See Anastas Vangeli (2010) 'Facing The Yugoslav Communist Past in Contemporary Macedonia: Tales of Continuity, Nostalgia and Victimization' In: Corina Dobus and Marius Stan (eds.) *Politics of Memory in Post-communist Europe* (Bucharest: Zeta Books), pp. 183-206.
[46] John Keane (1988) 'More Theses on the Philosophy of History' In: James Tully (ed.) *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and his Critics* (Cambridge: Polity), p. 204.
[47] The realization of such a dividing logic is discussed in detail in Chapter 8, relating to the events of 2011.

unveiled a major limitation of the research, it also allowed the discussion to move beyond the dividing logic of the civil war, offering a space to bring together peacefully diverging and opposing opinions. In particular, the story of Ahmed and Salah, both young men in their mid-20s, captures the relevance of thinking inward about positionality, since it can create a space to bridge grievances among people. While Ahmed was a member of the regime army and who fought for six months against the 'rebels,' Salah worked as a nurse helping out those 'rebels' who were injured during the clashes. Being abroad and far from home allowed them (and me) to meet, have dinner, laugh and discuss politically loaded questions. However, it remains emblematic how a general silence answered my comment:

> I wonder what happens if each one goes back to Libya, sticking to his own close community of people. Would you still be able to argue with each other, as you are doing, without killing one another?[48]

In another occasion the logic of 'both sides' functioned as a turning point in my relation with two politically opposing groups of interviewees (pro and anti-regime), gaining one and losing the other.[49] My decision to meet a well-known figure related to the Qadhdhafi regime and coming from the same tribe triggered the loss of trust, if not complete irritation, of a group of interviewees who self-identified as anti-Qadhdhafi, thus 'revolutionaries.' The result was they stopped interacting with me.

3.5 Ethical Considerations

Suspicion and being in-between 'both sides' not only influenced the positionality of the researcher; they also raised ethical considerations toward the safety of the interviewees, thus requiring the establishment of a 'set of moral principles' [50] aiming to preserve their confidentiality and anonymity. Since interviewees often expressed concerns over the use of and access to the data in light of the sensitive and political nature of the research, a careful explanation of the main questions and goals of the research preceded each interview. Interviews

[48] Field notes, Italy, July 2015.
[49] Anthropologist Cris Shore describes a similar situation, reflecting on his fieldwork in Perugia between two opposing Italian political groups. See Cris Shore (1999) 'Fictions of Fieldwork: Depicting the 'Self' in Ethnographic Writing (Italy)' In: Edward C. Watson (ed.) *Being There: Fieldwork in Anthropology* (London: Pluto Press), pp. 25-48.
[50] For ethical concerns, I referred to the Ethic's guide of the Association of Social Anthropology of the UK and Commonwealth available online at: https://www.theasa.org/ethics/guidelines.shtml (accesse date: 8th August 2017).

only started after verbal consent was granted from the interviewee and they were recorded if permission was granted. In order to assuage further their concerns, any personal information collected remained strictly confidential and direct access was restricted to the researcher. Recorded interviews, their transcription and personal field-notes were all digitalized and only stored into a University-provided computer, restricting their access with the set-up of a password. Moreover, all the names of the interviewees, whether or not they requested it in an explicit manner, were changed. In some cases, a digital copy of the recorded interview, together with its transcription, was sent to the interviewees who requested it. Measures to protect the confidentiality and anonymity of interviewees were, thus, taken primarily as a result of a mutual negotiation and understanding, prioritizing the concerns and requests of the interviewees. The last section focuses on the method and process of data analysis and the organization of the findings.

3.6 Data Analysis

As the formal process of collection of data through oral histories ended, another fundamental process took place: data analysis. During this process, I tried to make sense out of the collected data, interpreting what people have said and what I had read in their stories. The process entailed the creation and consolidation of meaning, trying to move back and forth from abstract concepts and concrete data, relying on several techniques of reasoning.[51] In this regard, this research adopted the inductive[52] technique of reasoning and relied on thematic content analysis[53] to capture and code the categories of meaning that emerged in the interviews. The analysis of data started in parallel with the process of data collection, while recurrent themes emerged, their related-academic literature was explored. The first step of data analysis entailed the electronic transcription of all collected data: recorded interviews; field-notes taken when interviewees did not want our conversation to be recorded; and numerous personal notes written before or after a specific interview.[54] To transform data into electronic Word-documents facilitated accessibility and order, easing the reading and comprehension processes.

[51] Sharan B. Merriam and Elizabeth J. Tisdell (eds.) (2016) *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation, 4th Edition* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass), p. 201.
[52] Bryman, *Social Research Methods*, p. 24.
[53] Ibid, p. 578-580.
[54] See also Uwe Flick (2015) 'Qualitative Data Analysis 2.0: Developments, Trends and Challenges' In: Norman K. Denzin**,** Michael D. Giardina (eds.) (2015) *Qualitative Inquiry and the Politics of Research* (Walnut Creek: Routledge).

Moreover, data were stored electronically in a portable memory stick and a University laptop, restricting access to them through the creation of a password. The process of transcription also functioned as a process of superficial reading of all the collected data, although a second process of reading and identification of what I call sub-themes followed.

During this procedure, I wrote notes at the margin of each interview, identifying all the diverse sub-themes relating to quotidian activities of life – i.e. stories about 'studying. The Green Book,' 'working for the Revolutionary Committees,' 'Qadhdhafi,' 'jokes,' 'consumption,' 'football' and so on. The categorization of those sub-themes allowed me to identify the recurrent stories of everyday life that the interviewees narrated. A new document was created listing all the sub-themes and the name of the interviewee who had recounted such stories. The second step entailed a third reading of all the transcribed data in order to make sense of what those stories revealed in terms of the functioning of power and resistance during al-Jamāhīrīyah. At this stage, I created a new document that divided those sub-themes on the everyday into more abstract/theoretical categories around questions of power and resistance, which slowly shaped the final division of chapters.

The primary data were also checked and compared through a perusal of secondary sources. For instance, to prove the existence or the content of a specific historical anecdote – i.e. a speech of Qadhdhafi or a government's reform -, secondary sources were consulted, such as YouTube videos, existing academic literature or newspapers. This process partly functioned as a technique of data triangulation, which helps to validate and enhance research by crosschecking the same information.[55] If possible, this served to further comprehend the data as well as enhance confidence in the research and its results. Finally, for some anecdotes relating to popular culture and, in particular, jokes, thematic content analysis was also combined with light coding of emic concepts and terms. In this case, specific attention was paid to the use of language and the emergence of a unique Libyan terminology. In so doing, I examined the links between social conditions and linguistic elements that compose a text, focusing on those choices of words and particular expression that were used to construct and/or deconstruct the political meanings they conveyed. It was, thus, crucial to grasp the social context within which these jokes or key-words functioned and assumed conflicting meanings.

[55] Michael Lewis-Beck, Alan Bryman, Tim Futing Liao (eds.) (2004) *The SAGE Encyclopedia of Social Science Research Methods: Volume 3* (London: Sage Publications), p. 1142.

The data collected rendered itself to be divided into four main and interrelated themes: people's quotidian experience of violence, fear and surveillance; the ambiguous nature of everyday actions in negotiating and (re)producing power and people's mundane hopes and aspirations for the future. The last thematic chapter presents the unexpected data of the study, discussing what aspects of the quotidian dynamics of power and resistance that characterized al-Jamāhīrīyah emerged in the ways the interviewees relayed the events of 2011. The emergence of these unexpected data, as section 3.3 also discusses, came as a result of two main elements: firstly, the open-ended and semi-structured nature of the interviews and, secondly, the contemporary relevance of the theme [the events in 2011] for the interviewees.

3.7 Conclusion

This chapter explained the adoption and implementation of the methodological tools of this study aiming to explore the political history of the al-Jamāhīrīyah through a reconstruction of the dynamics of power and resistance in the everyday life of people. Building on the insights of the previous chapter, it stressed the importance to rely on a research design that approaches social phenomena as being collectively accomplished by social actors, relying on the specific qualitative instrument of data collection called oral histories/narratives. Such a method was used to re-discover the role and voices of Libyans in the history of their own country, whose absence from previous studies had been identified. More importantly, the chapter considered how the precarious security conditions and ongoing violence in Libya affected the implementation of the study and, in particular, the responses and attitudes of the research participants. The presence of increasing fear and suspicion, together with the post-2011 dividing logic – meaning 'pro-government vs revolutionaries,' raised important questions concerning the positionality of the researcher vis-à-vis the interviewees. A reflection on such positionality pointed out the importance for researchers to be able of turning their gaze inward, questioning their assumptions and privileges, while allowing knowledge to be always negotiated with the interviewees. Finally, this chapter brought to light the shortcomings of the research, identifying how the absence of certain elements either created possibilities or signalled a limitation of the research. The following chapter, Chapter 4, contextualises the major political developments of al-Jamāhīrīyah from 1969 to 2011 and offers the necessary historical background to the discussion of the findings.

4. Situating al-Jamāhīrīyah

This chapter provides the necessary historical background for the analysis of the thematic findings of this study. The recurrent themes emerging from the interviewees' narratives inform and shape the chapter's structure, whose discussion is divided into four subthemes. Each one discusses a major dynamic of power and resistance that marked the rise and fall of al-Fatḥ Revolution from 1969 to 2011. The first theme 'The Rise of al-Fatḥ' discusses the successful coup d'état that overthrew the monarchy in 1969 and led to the uncontested rise to power of Qadhdhafi. The second theme 'A Challenge to the West' focuses on the anti-imperialist and resistance character of al-Fatḥ Revolution, exploring those forces at work that characterised the relationship between Libya and the West, up to its escalation in the 1990s. The third theme 'The End of al-Fatḥ?' navigates al-Jamāhīrīyah's attempts to survive international and domestic challenges to its power, triggering a reconfiguration of its structure and the emergence of internal conflicts. The last theme 'From '1st September' to '17th February' presents how the events that took place in 2011 brought to the fall of the regime. The conclusion summarizes the main argument of the chapter and its contribution to the study. The following is a detailed discussion of the different subthemes.

4.1 The Rise of al-Fatḥ

> Tell President Nasser we made this revolution for him. He can take everything of ours and add it to the rest of the Arab world's resources to be used for the battle [against Israel, and for Arab unity].[1]

At the end of World War II, when Libya slipped out of control from the Italian colonial authorities, France and Britain suggested to divide the country into two major spheres of interests: Cyrenaica and Tripolitania under the British control; Fezzan to the French authorities. Facing the opposition of Arab nationalists, in 1949 the United Nations (UN) launched a plan to create an independent and unified Libyan state, which came officially into existence in 1951 under the monarchy of King Idris al-Senussi. The monarchy, however, did not last long and in

[1] Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi's speech in Dirk Vandewalle (2006) *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 79.

1969 fell by the hands of a bloodless military coup d'état. The feeling of a newly formed national unity appeared "meaningless for the majority of the population,"[2] which is why regionalism and federalism characterized its structure. The monarchy only enjoyed a relatively strong support in the Eastern part of Libya, in the region of Cyrenaica, where the King shared historical and religious ties with the Senoussi Brotherhood, being a descendant and the Grand Shaykhh. During the Ottoman Empire and the Italian colonial occupation, the Brotherhood operated a rational and parsimonious control of the tribes in Cyrenaica, providing religious and social support, while also organizing the military resistance against colonial authorities.[3] The people living in the other two Libyan regions, Tripolitania in the West and Fezzan in the South, did not value these qualities of the King in a similar manner.[4]

While the monarchical constitution offered a broad spectrum of civil and social rights, two fundamental characteristics of post-independence Libya - elections and the federal system - did not last long. When the first free election was held in 1952, political parties from the opposition accused the government of electoral fraud. The monarchy reacted, suspending and abolishing all political parties and, in 1964, abolished the federal system altogether. Following the discovery of oil, the monarchy decided to centralize power in order to assign to the national government "the sole right for all transactions involving finance, transportations and, mostly important, oil and taxation."[5] Also, in need of Western technical assistance for oil extraction and production, the King made the unpopular move of conceding the military base of Wheelus Field to the US government, signalling further the monarchy's ideological distance from the Pan-Arab nationalist[6] sentiment of the region.

Such a distance emerged routinely within the education system, where the reliance on Egyptian teachers and materials influenced the development of Pan-Arab ideas and beliefs among the students.[7] In 1962, numerous student-led riots were organized in Tripoli and

[2]Anna Baldinetti (2012) 'La formazione dello stato e la costruzione dell'identità nazionale' [The formation of the state and the construction of the national identity] In: Karim Mezran & Arturo Varvelli (eds.) *Libia: fine o rinascita di una nazione?* [Libya: end or birth of a nation?] (Roma: Donzelli) pp. 3-20, p. 15.
[3] Ibid, p. 32.
[4] Moncef Ouannes (2009) *Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la libye contemporaine* [Military, élites and modernisation in contemporary libya] (Paris: L'Harmattan), p. 41.
[5] Ibid, p. 65.
[6] Pan-Arabism is that ideological and political movement aiming to unify all present-day Arab nations and Arab-speaking regions into a singular and unified state stretching from the Atlantic Ocean to the Persian Gulf. It is also worthwhile to stress that the ideological relevance of Pan-Arabism comes in relation to Arab Socialism. For a general understanding, see definitions of 'Arab Socialism' and 'Pan-Arabism' in Immanuel Ness and Zack Cope (eds.) *The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Imperialism and Anti-Imperialism: Vol. 1* (London: Palgrave), pp. 812-817; 915-916.
[7] Amal Obeidi (2001) *Political Culture in Libya* (Richmond: Curzon Press), p. 37.

Benghazi opposing the traditional-tribal ruling elite and demanding the recovery of the two Western military bases of Wheelus-Field and El-Adem. Recognizing the country's dilemmas, King Idris and his narrow circle of power - known as the royal palace (*diwan*) - tried to legitimize their own authority. They build an Arab, Muslim and – most importantly – patronage model to integrate the regional leaders within the governmental apparatus.[8] The social discontent, however, increased as a result of two main factors: firstly, the emergence of newly enriched social classes that, far from serving the state, used it to their advantage[9] and secondly, the start of the 1967 war, which confirmed the interference of the 'West' in the political affairs of the country. While the entire Arab world sided with Egypt and its allies against the Israeli pre-emptive attack, the Libyan government maintained a neutral position.

On 1st September 1969 a group of seventy graduates from the armed forces overthrew King Idris through a coup d'état. This bloodless military operation, whose code-name was 'Jerusalem' in honour of the Palestinian cause, responded to a set of social and political contradictions that the monarchy was not able to overcome. A week later, the name of the commander-in-chief of the Revolutionary Command Council (RCC) was revealed: Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi. Since the Free Officers wanted to break with the country's monarchical past, shaping Libya according to their ideological and political commitments, the first years of 'al-Fatḥ Revolution' were characterized by what Mansour El-Kikhia labelled as the 'Egyptianization of Libya.'[10] The RCC re-modelled the Libyan political system into the unique party formula of the Arab Socialist Union (ASU),[11] and signed a union declaration with Egypt, adopting its flag and anthem.[12] Subsequently, the RCC expelled the Italian nationals and Jews, confiscating all their assets,[13] and shut down the Western military bases in the country. Also, the newly established military government completely re-negotiated the existing agreements on oil production and profit with major Western companies, which considerably tipped the balance of power in favour of Libya.[14] All these achievements not

[8] Moncef Djaziri (1996) *État et société en libye : islam, politique et modernité* (State and society in libya: islam, politics and modernity) (Paris: L'Harmattan), p. 53.
[9] Ibid, p. 64.
[10] Mansour El-Kikhia (1997) *Libya's Qadhafi: The Politics of Contradiction* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida), p. 67.
[11] The Egyptian president Gamal Abdel Nasser created The Arab Socialist Union party on the principles of Pan-Arabism and Socialism. See more on the ASU Manifesto in Ouannes, *Militaires, élites et modernisation*, p.115.
[12] El-Kikhia, *Libya's Qadhafi*, p. 42.
[13] Ibid, p. 47.
[14] For more information on the 'Tripoli Agreements,' see Francisco Parra (2004) *Oil Politics: A Modern History of Petroleum* (London: I.B. Tauris), p. 132; or Frank C. Waddams (1980) *The Libyan Oil Industry* (London: Crom Helm) and Daniel Yergin (1991) *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money & Power* (New York: Simon & Schuster), p. 578.

only allowed the launch of redistributive policies and the planning of development programs for the population, but also signalled the RCC's desire to act upon its anti-colonial, anti-Western and Pan-Arab ideals.

Vandewalle notes that the initial "actions of the Libyan government propelled the Qadhdhafi regime to a stature within the region that only its most ardent supporters had thought achievable."[15] There was, however, a discrepancy of views among the various members of the RCC on how to carry out the Revolution, which the formation of the ASU had partly solved. In December 1969, for instance, the Ministry of Defence and Interior, Adam al-Hawaz and Ahmed Musa, attempted a military coup against the leadership of Qadhdhafi in opposition to his secret journey to meet Nasser in Egypt. The military conspiracy failed because the CIA warned Qadhdhafi not to trust these two officers.[16] This was neither the first, nor the last, of the battles within the RCC that Qadhdhafi, whose stature as a leader was becoming incontestable, had to confront. Such discrepancies resurfaced in relation to the difficulties that the RCC faced in persuading Libyans to participate in the economic, political and social life of the country. A new power-struggle kicked off between two opposing groups: the so-called 'technocrats,' who supported the creation of an efficient public system for the country, and the 'populists' (with Qadhdhafi among them) who wanted to pursue redistributive policies, realizing regional-ideological goals.

For these reasons, Qadhdhafi "chose the headlong rush by radicalizing his speech and adopting a prophetic strategy of legitimization of his power."[17] On 15th April 1973 in Zwara, he gave a taste of his Third Universal Theory, later known as 'The Green Book' [al-kitāb al-akhḍar], launching a 'cultural revolution.' The Zwara speech inaugurated the Libyan leader's version of 'popular democracy,' which aimed to consolidate the People's Power [*al-sulṭah al-sha'bīyah*] through the creation of people's committees at every societal level.[18] The establishment of the Popular Committees, which overlapped with the ASU party structure until its final dismantlement in 1975, aimed to "forge the direct linkage between the masses and the elite that the RCC had been so desperately seeking."[19] Addressing the disadvantaged classes,

[15] Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya*, p. 91.
[16] Geoff Simons (1996) *Libya: The Struggle for Survival* (London: Palgrave MacMillan), p. 322.
[17] Djaziri, *État et société en libye*, pp. 157-158.
[18] El-Kikhia, *Libya's Qadhafi,* p. 86.
[19] Omar I. El Fathaly and Monte Palmer (1995) 'Institutional Development in Qadhafi's Libya' In : Dirk Vandewalle (ed.) *Qadhafi's Libya 1969-1994* (New York: St Martin's Press), p. 163.

mostly rural people and tribes, Qadhdhafi laid down five points[20] for the continuation of the revolution, showing a clear intention to crush all those who opposed its legitimacy. This moment represented a pure 'political coup' because he succeeded in "mobilizing the marginal political forces that became interested in defending his power."[21]

The culmination of his ascendancy arrived with the establishment of al-Jamāhīrīyah [the Republic of the Masses] on 2nd March 1977 in Sebha, when Qadhdhafi announced four basic points that built upon the program of the Cultural Revolution and triggered the entire transformation of the Libyan society according to the directives outlined in 'The Green Book.'[22] Presented as an alternative to the pitfalls of Marxism and capitalism, 'The Green Book' aligned with the secular and socialist philosophical tradition of Gamal Abdel Nasser, Mao Zedong and Ali Shariati. It consisted of three parts dealing with the political, economic and social problems of democracy, while simultaneously presenting a solution to each one of them. Published as a whole in 1981, its central tenet - the theory of direct democracy - proposed that "ordinary citizens can directly manage their lives and devise their own solution to economic and social problems"[23] through a dual process: firstly, renouncing to any form of representation or delegation of their authority and secondly, recognizing the need for popular organization at every level of society.[24] For instance, 'The Green Book' considered the constitution[25] to be a man-made law, which "represents the will of the instrument of government (an individual, a parliament, a social class or a political party) to control and manipulate the people."[26] It urged people to organize themselves in People's Committees (*al-lijān al-shaʿbīyah*) and replicate

[20] The five points were: (1) interdiction of all current laws in Libya, with the exception of those contained within Islamic law (*shari'a*); (2) the banning of all opponents of the revolution, starting with the Muslim Brotherhood (*Ikhwan al-Muslimin*), the communists and the Ba'athists; (3) the delivery of weapons to the people in order to ensure the 'defense of the revolution;' (4) the proclamation of an 'administrative revolution,' since the bureaucracy had become, according to him, 'fat, lazy and detached from the people;' (5) the start of a 'cultural revolution' for fighting the demagogic spirit and the foreign cultural influences.

[21] Djaziri, *État et société en libye*, p. 157.

[22] The four points were: (1) changing the country's name from the Libyan Arab Republic into the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jahamariya; (2) adopting the Qur'an as the law of society; (3) establishing popular, direct authority through a system culminating in the General People's Congress; (4) the assigning of responsibility for defending the homeland to every man and woman through general military training as a normal practice. Mohammed Berween (2003) 'The Political Belief System of Qaddafi: Power Politics and Self-Fulfilling Prophecy' In: *The Journal of Libyan Studies* 4:1, p. 59.

[23] Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya*, p. 102.

[24] Muammar Al Gathafi (2005) *The Green Book* (Reading: Ithaca Press), p. 17.

[25] Some scholars have seen in Qadhdhāfī's theory the attempt to overcome the problems of Jean Jacques Rousseau's social contract, in which society becomes the overseer of its legislation and thus there is no need of a legislator. See Sami G. Hajjar (1980), 'The Jamahiriya Experiment in Libya: Qadhafi and Rousseau,' In: *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 18:2, pp. 181-200.

[26] Al Gathafi, *The Green Book*, p. 21.

their structure everywhere, from schools to factories, in order to establish a truly democratic government.

These years of institutional and ideological ferment coincided with the rise of international oil prices, which profoundly influenced the dynamics of al-Jamāhīrīyah. While oil revenues had quadrupled between 1973 and 1974, in 1979 the rise in domestic production and the concomitant Iranian revolution increased the annual income to a record $71 billion.[27] The oil boom of the second half of the 1970s allowed Qadhdhafi to undertake a bolder step, which aimed at eliminating the concepts of private property and employment. The role of traders was abolished, private businesses closed throughout the country, and state's supermarkets took over their function. Other socialist measures were taken in order to return the ownership of production to the people, such as the abolition of the concept of 'wage-earners,' to be replaced with 'partners,'[28] or the launch of *al-bayt li-sākinihī* policy [the house belongs to those who live in it], whose implementation turned tenants into owners of the rented properties overnight.[29] By the early 1980s, the regime had accomplished many of its promises, transforming slums and unhealthy dwellings into modern tenements[30] and offering free education to the majority of the population. At the social level, 'The Green Book' proclaimed that 'every nation should have a religion,'[31] and offered a lengthy analysis on the equality between men and women.[32] Another important element of Qadhdhafi's ideology was its re-interpretation of Islam, which aimed at limiting the power of the religious figures (*'ulamā'*) who openly rejected his vision.[33] For instance, those years witnessed the disappearance of the 'troublesome priest,'[34] Shaykh Mohamed Abd-Salam Al-Bishti, who had opposed publically Qadhdhafi's rejection of the Sunna tradition,[35] and the abolition of all religious endowment property (*waqf*).[36] The pamphlet also provided insights in relation to the corrupting role that familial and tribal structures could

[27] Matteo Villa (2012) 'Un caso poco studiato di rentier state' In: Karim Mezran & Arturo Varvelli (eds.) [A not well-studied case of rentier state] (eds.) *Libia: Fine o rinascita di una nazione?* [Libya: End or birth of a nation?] (Roma: Donzelli), p. 70.
[28] Al Gathafi, *The Green Book*, p. 33.
[29] Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya*, p. 105.
[30] Waniss Otman and Erling Karlberg (2007) *The Libyan Economy: Economic Diversification and International Repositioning* (Berling: Springer-Verlag), p. 112.
[31] Al Gathafi, *The Green Book*, p. 56.
[32] Maria Graeff-Wassink (1993) *Women at Arms: Is Ghadafi a Feminist?* (London: Darf Publisher).
[33] See more in George Joffé (1995) 'Qadhafi's Islam in Local Historical Perspective' In: Vandewalle (ed.) *Qadhafi's Libya 1969-1994*, pp. 139-154.
[34] Alison Parteger (2008) 'Qadhafi and Political Islam in Libya' In: Dirk Vandewalle (ed.) *Libya Since 1969: Qadhafi's Revolution Revisited* (London: Palgrave MacMillan), pp. 83-104, p. 93.
[35] In order to understand more on how Qadhdhafi approached Islam within his Third Universal Theory, see the analytical work of Mohammed Ayoubi (1991) *Islam & The Third Universal Theory: Religious Thought of Muammar Al-Qadhafi* (London: Routledge).
[36] Law N. 16 of March 1973.

play in the process of state-formation,[37] and promoted the importance to practice sport as a collective - in line with the Bedouin tradition[38] - rather than being a numbing practice for the masses.

While all these measures were taken in accordance to the directives outlined in 'The Green Book,' in 1977 Qadhdhafi also launched the so-called Revolutionary Committees (RC). Created to represent the ideological vanguard[39] of the masses, 'The Green Book' did not mention their creation and Qadhdhafi only envisioned a temporary role[40] as 'the safety valve and sieve' of People's Power.[41] They nonetheless became a veritable 'State within the State,' turning into an omnipotent militia. The RC carried out acts of unprecedented violence, "such as the burning of books in the universities, the hanging of Islamists, the physical elimination of opponents in the country and in exile,"[42] while claiming to represent the whole of society. They had the power to set up revolutionary courts, control schools, universities, factories, media and especially the army and the police. During the first 'revolutionary' decade, they also accumulated wealth through diverse illicit practices, such as the confiscation of properties, misuse of public funds and money laundering.[43] Their creation marked "the separation of formal authority - as embodied by the congress and committee system [theorized in the Green Book] - and revolutionary authority."[44] While their first members belonged to the 'revolutionary' generation formed within the ideological camps,[45] who mostly came from disadvantaged classes,[46] their ranks changed and developed over time, with their power fading gradually from the early 2000s.

The launch of al-Jamāhīrīyah was a fundamental historical moment, which allowed Qadhdhafi to consolidate his power through the implementation of a series of economic, political and military reforms that reduced the power of numerous and potential political opposition groups.

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[37] Al Gathafi, *The Green Book*, p. 63.
[38] Ibid, p. 80.
[39] They also produced their own journal, The Green March (*az-zaḥf al-akhḍar*). For more information on the goals of the Revolutionary Committees, see Hanspeter Mattes (1995) 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Committees' In: Dirk Vandewalle (ed.) *Qadhafi's Libya: 1969-1994* (New York: St Martin's Press), pp. 90-94.
[40] As Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi remarked: "The RCs will not exercise power after the success of the People's revolution anywhere." See Ibid, p. 93.
[41] Gideon Gera (1977-1978) 'Libya,' in: Colin Legum, Haim Shaked, Daniel Dishon, Jacqueline Dyck (eds.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 2, p. 631.
[42] Ouannes, *Militaires, élites et modernisation*, p. 196.
[43] Ibid, p. 194.
[44] Mattes, 'The Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Committees,' p. 94.
[45] Obeidi, *Political Culture*, p. 54.
[46] Moncef Djaziri (1987) 'La dynamique des institutions et la structure du pouvoir en Libye 1978-1987' [Institutional dynamics and structure of power in libya 1978-1987] In : *Annuaire de l'afrique du nord* (Annuary of north africa) 26 (Paris : Centre national de la recherche scientifique), p. 465.

It substantively curtailed the power of religious elites, landowners and businesspersons, abolishing the Revolutionary Council Command (RCC) and weakening the Libyan Army through the creation of the RC.[47] These political changes not only represented a watershed for Libya, they also aimed to confront the hegemonic power of Western countries in the region.

4.2 A Challenge to the 'West'

> The Americans think that they dominate the World with their fleets and their military bases, constantly defying the wishes of the people of the World […] America continues to support Israel in order to humiliate the Arabs. American imperialism now takes the form of limitless aid to monopolistic oil companies which refuse to recognize our rights […] American imperialism has passed all bounds. It is time for us to give a vigorous slap to the impassive and insolent face of America.[48]

In June 1973, the Libyan government announced the nationalization of American oil companies and expressed its refusal to bow down to the whims and interests of what Qadhdhafi called American imperialism. As mentioned earlier, the military coup of 1969 took place in a climate of immense frustration among Libyans, and for most of the Arab world, toward their pro-Western governments and a broader Western interference in the region. For these reasons, the Free Officers both captured and represented the popular sentiments of average Libyans. They were no longer willing to remain helpless and their actions, emulating the Egyptian leader Gamal Abdel Nasser, questioned the existing balance of power with the West. From the very early stages, and even more so with the launch of al-Jamāhīrīyah, al-Fatḥ Revolution posed an ideological, economic and military challenge to the West.

Although such confrontations started with the closure of British and American military bases in Libya and the use of oil as a means for foreign policy pressure, they accentuated when the Libyan regime staunchly decided to export its 'revolutionary ideas' aboard. Believing in the

[47] Berween, 'The Political Belief System of Qaddafi,' p. 59.
[48] Qadhdhafi's speech at the Third Anniversary of the Evacuation of the American troops from the Wheelus Air Base, Tripoli, al-Fajar al-Jadid, 12 June 1973.

legitimacy of armed struggle[49] in order to achieve revolutionary goals,[50] the regime provided weaponry and training to those 'freedom fighters' that Western states considered 'terrorist groups.' The supported groups ranged from the Abu Nidal Organization and the Irish Republican Army (IRA), to Muslim minority groups in the Philippines, and various African, Palestinian and South American revolutionary groups, as well as the Nation of Islam in the US. The Libyan regime also pursued an expansionist agenda, invading Chad in 1973 to 'claim back' the bordering area of the Azouzou strip, while supporting the anti-Western/French group, Front de Libération Nationale du Tchad, in the ongoing Chadian civil war.

In response, Western countries had tried to overthrow Qadhdhafi and destabilize al-Fatḥ. Such attempts date back to the 'Hilton Assignment' in early 1970s, when the British government and its intelligence agency MI6 designed a plan to overthrow the Libyan leader. The UK never implemented its plan, since the US government rejected such option based on Libya not having decided to align with the Soviet Union.[51] Such political tensions resurfaced in 1979, when the US added Libya to the list of state-sponsoring terrorism, [52] imposed economic sanctions in 1982 and initiated a series of secret and public military operations to overthrow the regime. For instance, in 1985, the US government designed the so-called 'Flower' plan, which included two different options to strike Libya: a covert operation to overthrow Qadhdhafi with the help of Egypt and a Libyan dissident group, the National Salvation Front of Libya (NSFL);[53] a pre-emptive military strike in concert with Egypt. Although these two operations did not materialize, in 1986 the US carried out a bombing operation, 'El Dorado Canyon,' under the pretext of 'fighting international terrorism.'[54] President Ronald Reagan authorized the shelling of the two cities of Benghazi and Tripoli, including the residence of the Libyan leader in Bāb al-'Azīzīyah.[55] Moreover, in 1986-87 the US government, together with Israel,

[49] For instance, a theorization of the use of violence for revolutionary goals is present in the English version of Revolutionary Committees' edited newspaper. See The Green March (1982, 2 April) 'Violence: A Tool Imposed by Reality,' p.13.
[50] See also Ahmed Yousef Ben Aessa (2014) *Libyan Foreign Policy: A Study of Policy Shifts in Libya's Nuclear Programme* (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Glasgow), p. 129.
[51] See Patrick Seale and Maureen McConville (1973) *The Hilton Assignment* (New York: Harper Collins); Stephen Dorrill (2002) *MI6: Inside the Cover World of Her Majesty's Secret Service* (New York: Touchstone), pp. 735-738 and Brian L. Davis (1990) *Qaddafi, Terrorism and the Origins of the U.S. Attack on Libya* (New York: Praeger), pp. 33-34.
[52] See Mattia Toaldo (2013) *The Origins of the US War on Terror* (London: Routledge), pp. 136-138.
[53] For more information on the political discourse of the NFSL, see – for instance – NFSL (1992) *Libya under Gaddafi and the NFSL Challenge: An Anthology of the NFSL News reports 1989-1992*.
[54] Mahmoud G. ElWarfally (1989) *Imagery and Ideology in U.S. Policy toward Libya* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press), p. 167.
[55] Andrew Bacevich (2016) *America's War for the Greater Middle East* (New York: Penguin) and Davis, *Qaddafi, Terrorism and the Origins of the U.S. Attack on Libya,* pp. 133-171.

had also taken up a proactive role in Chad, turning Libyan prisoners of war [56] into a 'contras' group aimed at supporting the NFSL and overthrow Qadhdhafi.[57]

The first Gulf War in 1990 also fuelled the political dispute between the West and Libya, which radicalized the latter's political position among other Arab states. Following the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, the Libyan regime's rejection of any American military interference in the Arabian Peninsula clashed with the interests of Arab Gulf states, like Saudi Arabia. While Libya had become one of the first Arab states to use oil production and pricing as a tool to pressure Western countries, Saudi Arabia instead deployed the same means in order to threaten other Arab states within the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC). Believing that rising oil prices could hurt Western economies, the Saudi monarchy preferred preserving its security interests, thus assuring US-Western protection.[58]

The political relationship between Libya and the West only reached a major turning point after three years of investigation over the bombing of Pan Am flight 103 in 1988 in Lockerbie (Scotland), whose explosion had caused the death of 270 people. Although the initial findings assigned responsibility to a Palestinian terrorist group backed up by Syria and Iran,[59] in 1991 the US and UK governments concluded that two Libyan subjects had orchestrated the attack as a response to the 1986 US bombings of Libya. Following this decision, France also reached the same conclusion over the explosion of another flight - UTA 772 DC - in the skies of Niger in September 1989, condemning another six Libyan subjects. It seemed that Libya had targeted a French flight in response to France's support of Chadian forces against the Libyan Army. While the Libyan government initially asserted that those accusations were outrageous, it also proposed to establish a 'neutral' international court for the trial of the two Libyan subjects, in accordance with international law procedures. [60]

Both the UK and the US rejected such a proposal and deemed it a sign of obstructionism, along with the refusal of the Libyan government to hand over the two suspects. Consequently, they

[56] See Sam C. Nolutshungu (1996) *Limits of Anarchy: Intervention and State Formation in Chad* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia), p. 310.
[57] Human Rights Watch (HRW) (2016) *Enabling a Dictator: The United States and Chad's Hissène Habré 1982-1990*, available at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2016/06/28/enabling-dictator/united-states-and-chads-hissene-habre-1982-1990 (access date: 02 October 2017).
[58] Younis Ali Lahwej (1988) *Ideology and Power in Libyan Foreign Policy with Reference to Libyan-American Relations from the Revolution to the Lockerbie Affair* (University of Reading: unpublished PhD dissertation), pp. 213-214.
[59] Richard Norton and Ian Black (2001) 'Palestinian Links Remain Unexplained' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2001/feb/01/world.lockerbie2 (access date: 15 January 2018).
[60] Alfred P. Rubin (1993) 'Libya, Lockerbie and the law' In: *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 4:1, pp. 1-19.

began exerting pressure on the United Nations Security Council until it passed Resolution 748 in 1992.[61] The resolution imposed an air and arms embargo, a ban to the sale of oil equipment and, most importantly, called on Libya "to cease all forms of terrorist action and assistance to terrorist groups."[62] This confrontation not only provided the conditions for powerful Western states to discipline al-Jamāhīrīyah, but also re-emphasized the underlying causes of their tensions. Al-Jamāhīrīyah perceived Western and, particularly, American imperialism as an obstacle for the freedom and development of the Arab region, particularly in light of their staunch support to Israel. The US saw Qadhdhafi as a 'despotic and authoritarian ruler,' the 'most prominent supporter of terrorist activities,' and Libya as a 'stockpile of weaponry.'[63] The neutral response of Arab countries to the imposition of the international sanctions on Libya pushed al-Jamāhīrīyah to abandon its Pan-Arab policies and move gradually toward creating a union of Sub-Saharan states. The gradual escalation of the confrontation between Libya and the West also combined with economic shortcomings related to a decline of oil revenues, which forced the regime to rethink its economic dirigisme.

4.3 The End of al-Fatḥ?

> You will see that those who have failed to resolve their economic problems in their countries and who could not mobilize popular forces for the development and for the exploitation of the country's resources turn … toward *infitah*, as in Egypt. They open the gates to foreign exploitative capital, to sumptuous palaces, to American corporations, to multinationals […] throwing themselves into the arms of economic colonialism.[64]

[61] Similarly, Alfred P. Rubin also contends that the 'irrational' actions of the Security Council seemed to reflect American and British political interests rather than the procedures of international law: "The sanctions ordered by the Security Council appear to rest upon evidence of Libyan involvement in 'terrorism' that has not been made public, has been confused in the public mind with a request for extradition or a surrender of Libyan nationals that has no legal basis, and […] demonstrates an unequal application of law and power." See Rubin, 'Libya, Lockerbie and the law,' p. 15.

[62] United Nations Security Council (1992) Resolution 748, available online at: http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/748(1992) (access date: 02 October 2017).

[63] ElWarfally, *Imagery and Ideology in U.S. Policy toward Libya*, p.165.

[64] Hamid Barrada, Mark Kravetz, and Mark Whitaker (1984) *Kadhafi: 'Je suis unopposant à l'échelon mondial'* [Qadhdhafi: 'I am an opponent at the global level'] (Lausanne: Editions Pierre-Marcel Favre).

Since the late 1980s, numerous factors began to challenge and undermine the egalitarian and anti-imperialist premises of al-Jamāhīrīyah. While this period witnessed a heightened confrontation with the West, in particular the US, repeated collapses of the oil price and the subsequent decline of its revenues unveiled the shortcomings of the Libyan economy. The adventurist support for international revolutionary movements, together with the failure to diversify the economy's reliance on oil, forced the regime to embark on a process of liberalization into two different phases, in 1987 and in the mid-1990s. The first wave of economic liberalization (*infitah*) - or what Qadhdhafi termed a 'Revolution within the Revolution'[65] – was launched in 1987 to remedy the shortage of goods and products in state-controlled supermarkets, thus providing the population with the goods it wanted. The second wave of liberalization and privatization was activated as a result of the burdening effects of the sanctions over the population throughout the 1990s, allowing private businesses to resume and initiating the creation of private commercial banks.

The regime assumed an ambivalent and contradictory position toward those measures, allowing their implementation only to the extent that they did not challenge its own power. To turn al-Jamāhīrīyah into a free-market economy, on the one hand, meant betraying and abandoning the egalitarian tenets of al-Fatḥ, while simultaneously requiring a complete reshaping of the political structure. These policies, on the other hand, represented the only measure for the regime to curb the rising social discontent, which also stemmed from the military debacle in Chad and the international sanctions. In such a situation, al-Jamāhīrīyah opted for the implementation of an agenda of economic reform outside the rule of law and bureaucratic normalization, while renewing mechanisms of patronage and tribalism. This process led to the "underperformance of the public sector, corruption and, above all, to the emergence of black markets."[66] The informal economy not only provided the circulation of those goods that the population wanted, but also offered opportunities for the investment of private capital that members of the security apparatuses (police-intelligence-military) had gained in the previous decade. The generation of young revolutionaries, who had participated to al-Fath Revolution, accumulated wealth and power through misuse of public funds and marriage-alliances with the families of rich businessmen from the old monarchical regime.[67] While the initial launch of

[65] See Dirk Vandewalle (1991) 'Qadhafi's "Perestroika": Economic and Political Liberalization in Libya' In: *Middle East Journal* 45:2, pp. 216-231 and Ronald Bruce St John (2008) 'The Changing Libyan Economy: Causes and Consequences' In: *Middle East Journal* 62:1, pp. 75-91.
[66] Saleh Mohamed Abdussalam (2006) *Privatization and its Future Implications in Libya: A Case Study of the Libyan National Textile Company* (Unpublished Doctoral thesis: Northumbria University), pp. 101-102.
[67] See Ouannes, *Militaires, élites et modernisation*, p. 248.

egalitarian economic policies did not allow to re-invest this capital, these waves of liberalization opened up the gates of investment, enabling its circulation abroad. This process triggered two main and interrelated effects: firstly the abandonment of egalitarian economic principles and secondly, the gradual transformation of those regime officers into a class of *comprador* of global financial capital, which later became known as the 'old-guard.'[68]

Qadhdhafi denounced the role of the security apparatuses and, in particular, the past abuses of the RC. However, the agenda of economic liberalization turned those same security-officers into a class of merchants operating within an informal economy. Social inequalities now appeared more visibly as a result of these dynamics, affecting the legitimacy of the regime. In this scenario, domestic opposition turned into armed popular rebellions, such as the attempted coup d'état from the Warfalla tribe in 1993 or the Islamist mobilization in the Eastern part of the country from the mid-1990s. The regime, consequently, started fighting corruption, speculation and illicit accumulation of wealth by passing the 'Purification Law No. 10,' as well as creating the so-called 'Cleansing or Purification Committees' (*lijān al-taṭhīr*) in 1994, under the motto 'From where did you obtain this [wealth]?' (*Min ayna laka hada?*). Those measures, however, failed to eradicate corruption[69] because the renewed mechanisms of patronage and tribalism, aiming to confer stability to the regime, were entrenched into a larger culture of favours, exchanges and bribes.[70]

After almost seven years of UN-imposed economic sanctions and a tug of war with the West over Lockerbie, al-Jamāhīrīyah's internal stability only looked shakier. The population suffered increasingly from the economic consequences of the international sanctions, and the increasing appearance of social inequalities appeared to betray the founding egalitarian tenets of al-Fatḥ. Under such pressure, al-Jamāhīrīyah realized the importance to normalize its relations with the West in order to acquire domestic and international stability. In April 1999 the regime surrendered the two suspects accused over Lockerbie in accordance with the requests of US and Britain. Europe quickly congratulated them on this move and welcomed

[68] See Dirk Vandewalle (2009) *The Institutional Restraints of Reform in Libya: From Jamahiriyya to Constitutional Republic?* (Unpublished: Oxford Conference Paper), available online at: http://archive.libya-al-mostakbal.org/LM2009/Oct2009/051009_reform_in_libya.html (access date: 12 May 2017) and Alison Parteger (2010) 'Reform in Libya: Chimera or Reality' In: *Mediterranean Paper Series*, available online at: http://www.gmfus.org/publications/reform-libya-chimera-or-reality (access date: 08 May 2017).

[69] It is interesting to note that the PC soon started abusing their authority, leading to the rise of popular discontent and forcing the regime to establish another committee – 'Volcano Committees' – in order to mitigate their power. See Yehudit Ronen (1997) 'Libya' In: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (ed.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey XXI* (Westview Press), p. 546.

[70] See similarities with the Tunisian case in Beatrice Hibou (2011) *The Force of Obedience: The Political Economy of Repression in Tunisia* (Cambridge: Polity Press), pp.238-241.

Qadhdhafi back as a legitimate counterpart, while the US government remained more cautious.[71] European countries, such as Italy, France and Britain, were more eager to accept Libya's rehabilitation due to the strategic location of the country in the Mediterranean. The re-integration of Libya allowed them to control the influx of African migrants, guaranteed a large level of oil production and – most importantly – provided opportunities for new financial investments, i.e. the selling of arms and technology, development of tourism, education and industrial sectors.[72] In 2000 the UK, consequently, passed a Terrorist Act listing the Islamist organization Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) as a terrorist group, a few years after the same British intelligence agencies had helped the group to organize a military coup against Qadhdhafi.[73]

A major turning point for the rapprochement between Libya and the West took place in the aftermath of the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks to the World Trade Centre in New York. Facing the deadly attack of Al-Qaeda, the US government responded by launching the 'War on Terror' and, after invading Afghanistan in 2001, brought down the Iraqi regime of Saddam Hussein in March 2003. In that same year, Qadhdhafi announced publically that Libya was abandoning its Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) program.[74] In addition to the WMD requisite, Washington also wanted Tripoli to end its sponsorship of terrorism, accept responsibility and pay compensation for Lockerbie.[75] As Libya accepted all these conditions, the US followed other European states in dropping all the economic sanctions and re-engaging officially with al-Jamāhīrīyah.[76] While this rapprochement re-activated diplomatic and economic ties, the two countries also achieved major results at the level of counterterrorism

[71] Ronald Bruce St John (2004) ''Libya Is Not Iraq': Preemptive Strikes, WMD and Diplomacy' In: *Middle East Journal* 58:3, pp. 386-402; Yahyia Zoubir (2006) 'The United States and Libya: From Confrontation to Normalization' In: *Middle East Policy* XIII:2, pp. 48-70; Dafna Ochman (2006) 'Rehabilitating a Rogue: Libya's WMD Reversal and Lessons for US Policy' In: *Parameters* 36:1, pp. 63-78; Jonathan Schwartz (2007) 'Dealing with a 'rogue state': the Libya precedent' In: *The American Journal of International Law* 101:1, pp. 553-580.
[72] Saskia Van Genugten (2016) *Libya in Western Foreign Policies: 1911–2011* (London: Palgrave MacMillan), p. 135.
[73] On the collaboration between Tony Blair and Qadhdhafi, see Martin Bright (2004) Qaddafi still haunts 'stray dogs' in UK In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/uk/2004/mar/28/politics.libya (access date: 09 August 2016).
[74] BBC (2003) '2003: Libya gives up chemical weapons,' available online at: http://news.bbc.co.uk/onthisday/hi/dates/stories/december/19/newsid_4002000/4002441.stm (access date: 05 September 2017); see also Yahia Zoubir (2002) 'Libya in US Foreign Policy: From rogue state to good fellow?' In: *Third World Quarterly* 23:1, pp. 31-53.
[75] Dana Moss (2010) 'Reforming the Rogue: Lessons from the US-Libya Rapprochement' In: *Policy* #105 (Washington Institute of Near East Studies), available at: https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus105.pdf (access date: 05 September 2017).
[76] Eben Kaplan (2007) 'How Libya Got Off the List' In: *Council of Foreign Relations*, available at: https://www.cfr.org/backgrounder/how-libya-got-list (access date: 8 October 2017).

cooperation. For instance, al-Jamāhīrīyah started providing essential information on those numerous Libyans with ties to Al-Qaeda,[77] while the US government designated the LIFG as a terrorist organisation in 2004. Together with the US and UK, Libya cooperated in a programme of extraordinary rendition, transferring suspected individuals from one country to another by means that bypassed all judicial and administrative due process.[78] Libyan internal stability benefited from these actions, as the regime was able to crackdown on the opposition groups and boost the economy.

As Dana Moss notes, Libya-US cooperation, however, remained limited to those areas of mutual interests.[79] The pragmatic rapprochement to the West came hand in hand with an ideological stance of Qadhdhafi that – in part – remained attached to those same values that had characterized al-Fatḥ since 1969. In 2006, for instance, the Libyan regime kept asking for guarantees over its sovereignty, signing a Joint Letter of Peace and Security, together with Britain.[80] The letter recalled both countries' mutual commitment to refrain from "organizing, assisting or participating in acts of civil strife or terrorism" and "the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of either State, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations."[81] Also, in 2009, participating for the first time to a UN Summit in New York, Qadhdhafi gave a two-hour speech proposing to rename the UN Security Council as the 'Terror Council.'

This period coincided with the public rise of Qadhdhafi's son - Saif al-Islam – into the domestic political arena, raising numerous hopes and promises of internal reforms to a growing young population. Since 2003, Saif al-Islam[82] had been associated with numerous and important political manoeuvres aiming to reform Libya. In 1999, Saif al-Islam founded the Gaddafi

[77] It is also important to note that, according to the 'Sinjar Records,' a list of documents listing all the foreign fighters joining al Qaeda in Iraq-via-Syria in 2007, a large part were Libyans coming from the city of Derna. For more information, see: George Joffe (2015) 'Derna: the Libyan breeding ground for IS' In: *The New Arab*, available online at: https://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/politics/2015/2/20/derna-the-libyan-breeding-ground-for-is (access date: 12 October 2016) and Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman (2011) Al Qaida Foreign Fighters in Iraq (West Point Report), available online at: https://www.ctc.usma.edu/v2/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/aqs-foreign-fighters-in-iraq.pdf (access date: 12 October 2016).

[78] See Amnesty Report (2006) *USA: Below the radar: Secret flights to torture and 'disappearance*,' available at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/AMR51/051/2006/en/ (access date: 09 August 2016).

[79] Moss, 'Reforming the Rogue,' p. 20.

[80] Ibid.

[81] United Nations, Security Council (2006) *Joint Letter on Peace and Security between the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*, available online at: http://repository.un.org/bitstream/handle/11176/18938/S_2006_484-EN.pdf?sequence=3&isAllowed=y (access date: 12 September 2017).

[82] For more information on the linkage between Saif al Islam and the country's reforms, see Alison Parteger (2010) 'Reform in Libya: Chimera or Reality' In: *Mediterranean Paper Series*, available online at: http://www.gmfus.org/publications/reform-libya-chimera-or-reality (access date: 08 May 2017).

International Charity and Development Foundation (GICDF), which was the only authorized non-governmental organization (NGO) allowed to discuss human rights issues in Libya. The charity's goals were to address very sensitive matters entailing past government's abuse of power. It aimed to shed light on the unknown fate of disappeared prisoners from the Abu Salim prison in 1996, and those children who died of HIV in Libyan hospitals.[83] In 2006, Saif also started the negotiations for the release of more than 200 prisoners affiliated to different Islamist groups, such as the LIFG, which successfully concluded in 2010 with their official renouncement to 'jihad' (armed struggle) against the regime.[84]

Like his father, Saif al-Islam started delivering powerful public speeches, criticizing in a persistent manner the level of institutional corruption and accusing the old revolutionary 'fat cats'[85] of looting the country's resources and money. He sponsored the setting up of two television station - *al-Libiyya* and *al-Shabibiyya* - and two online newspapers – *Oea* and *Quryna* -[86] that did not refrain from tackling delicate and controversial political issues, while simultaneously questioning the regime and its policies. He relentlessly pursued an open diplomacy towards Western governments, the United States in primis, in order to make Libya a country of primary interest for foreign investors. In 2003, for instance, he wrote an article on '*Middle East Policy*' suggesting that Libya was "now ready to transform decades of mutual antagonism into an era of genuine friendship"[87] with the US. Also, Saif relied on international research agencies – i.e. Monitor Group – and academic scholars to outline an economic and

[83] On Saif al-Islam's initiatives on human rights abuses and extraordinary detentions, see Amnesty International (2010) *'Libya of Tomorrow': What Hope for Human Rights?* (London: Amnesty Group) and Human Rights Watch Report (2009) *Truth and Justice Can't Wait: Human Rights Developments in Libya amid Institutional Obstacles*, available at: https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/libya1209webwcover.pdf (access date: 17 May 2017).

[84] See Gaddafi International Charity and Development Foundation (2010) 'Text of Speech by the Chairman of the Foundation and the Press Conference Marking the Release of 214 members of various Jihadi groups,' In: *AlGaddafi.org*, available online at:http://algaddafi.org/release-of-hakim-bel-haj-text-of-speech-by-the-chairman-of-the-foundation-and-the-press-conference-marking-the-release-of-214-members-of-various-jihadist-groups-hakim-khweldi-bel-haj-sami-khalifa-essadi-khaled-al-sharif (access date: 09 May 2017); and Omar Ashour (2010) 'De-Radicalizing Jihadists the Libyan Way' In: *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, available online at: http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/?fa=40531 (access date: 09 May 2017).

[85] Reuters (2009) Gaddafi's son appointed to key post, available online at: http://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-saif-idUSTRE59F35C20091016 (access date: 17 May 2017) and al-Arabiya (2006) 'Sayf al-islām qāl inal-jamāhīrīyah laysat hiya al-firdaws' [Saif al-islam says that libya is not a paradise], available online at: http://archive.libya-al-mostakbal.org/LibyaInThePress/August2006/alarabia_sief230806.htm (access date: 17 May 2017).

[86] Those newspapers and television channels belonged to the Al-Ghad Media Group, see more information in Fatima El Issawi (2013) *Transitional Libyan Media: Free at Last?* (Carnegie Papers), p. 6 available online at: http://carnegieendowment.org/2013/05/14/transitional-libyan-media-free-at-last-pub-51747 (access date: 17 May 2017).

[87] See Saif Aleslam Al–Qadhafi (2003) 'Libyan–American Relations' In: *Middle East Policy* 10:1, p. 44.

political programme that would help building a vision for the country until 2019,[88] including the draft of a constitution that Libya lacked since 1977.[89] Directed to the young generation of Libyans, all these initiatives embodied the kernel of the country's futurity, as the name of the program also testified, 'Tomorrow's Libya' or 'Libya of Tomorrow' (*Lībiyā al-Ghad*).[90]

Both rumours and more concrete initiatives suggested that the 'Western-educated'[91] son of the Libyan leader was paving his way to power, enabling the gradual retirement of his father. In June 2003, Qadhdhafi's decision to appoint Shukri Ghanem, a little-known oil economist, to the post of General Secretary of the General People's Committee seemed to prove further al-Jamāhīrīyah's willingness to support Saif's program. Ghanem not only was a close friend and ally of Saif al-Islam, but such an appointment also broke from the usual reshuffling of ministers (112 in total) that Libya had had in the past thirty years. Saif al-Islam, together with a group of like-minded political figures - also called 'reformists,' [92] appeared to be on the verge of breaking from thirty years of 'revolutionary-driven' and regime-managed political programmes in order to modernise and privatize the country. Saif's reformist agenda, nonetheless, struggled to gain momentum due to the opposition of the so-called 'old guard.' This group of powerful military-security officers, who gained the most from a status quo based on an economy of patronage triggered by the 'informal' liberalization of the country's economy in the late 1980s, saw Qadhdhafi's son's initiatives as a potential threat to their power. In such a situation, after Saif had announced his retirement from the political arena in 2010, Libya reached 2011.

[88] See Monitor Group (2007) *Project to Enhance the Profile of Libya and Muammar Qadhafi: Executive Summary Phase 1*, available online at: http://www.motherjones.com/files/project_to_enhance_the_profile_of_libya_and_muammar_qadhafi.pdf (17 May 2017) and (2011) Foreign Agents Registration Act filing, available online at: https://ia801005.us.archive.org/0/items/215309-monitor-company-group-lp-foreign-agents/215309-monitor-company-group-lp-foreign-agents.pdf (access date: 17 May 2017).

[89] See Ethan Chorin (2012) *Exit Gaddafi: The Hidden History of the Libyan Revolution* (London: Saqi Books), pp. 152-153.

[90] The report contains the most important points of Lībiyā al-Ghad in terms of economic reforms, see Michael E. Porter and Daniel Yergin (2006) *National Economic Strategy: An Assessment of the Competitiveness of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*.

[91] Saif al Islam had gained an MA at the University of Vienna and a doctoral degree in Political Science at the London School of Economics (LSE).

[92] See Alison Parteger (2012) *Libya: The rise and fall of Qaddafi* (Yale: Yale University Press), pp. 193-195.

4.4 From '1st September' to '17th February'

In 2011, many countries in the North African and Middle Eastern region witnessed major political upheavals.[93] Starting from Tunisia and then spreading to other countries, those protests had a similar leitmotif. Thousands of people flooded into the streets demanding their respective presidents to step down, while asking for better living conditions. On 17th February 2011, the families of the victims of the Abu Salim prison massacre[94] reversed into the streets of Benghazi asking for more clarity into the inquiry of their relatives' disappearance, as well as economic reforms.[95] While the protests started peacefully, they turned into an open armed conflict in less than a month. Many political figures of al-Jamāhīrīyah defected to the side of the protesters and on 27th February – only ten days after the initial uprising – a National Transitional Council (NTC) was formed to act as the executive and political face of the 'revolution,' receiving immediate international recognition.[96] Useless, if not completely absent, were the international attempts to negotiate a peaceful transition or implementation of reforms between the regime and the 'rebels.' While regime forces quickly gained back control of all the rebels-held areas, reaching the outskirts of the city of Benghazi, a moral consensus grew among numerous Western countries toward the necessity of a military intervention in support of the protesters in order to avoid an impeding genocide. The United Nations Security Council, consequently, gathered and voted favourably for UNSC Resolution 1973 on March 13, 2011,[97]

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2. [93] The story of the 'Arab Spring' has been already narrated by a great number of scholars and commentators, see Hamid Dabashi (2012) *The Arab Spring: The End of Postcolonialism* (London: Zed Books), Joseph Massad (2012) 'The Arab Spring and Other American Seasons' In: *Al Jazeera Online*, available at: http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2012/08/201282972539153865.html (access date: 9 August 2016); Stefan Borg (2016) 'The Arab Uprisings, the Liberal Civilizing Narrative and the Problem of Orientalism' In: *Middle East Critique* 25:3, pp. 211-227.

[94] See Human Rights Watch (2006) *Libya: June 1996 Killings at Abu Salim Prison*, available at https://www.hrw.org/news/2006/06/27/libya-june-1996-killings-abu-salim-prison (access date: 08 September 2017); Lindsey Hilsum (2012) *Sandstorm: Libya in the Time of Revolution* (New York: The Penguin Press); Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya*. See also Amina Zarrugh (2018) 'You Exile Them in Their Own Country': The Everyday Politics of Reclaiming the Disappeared in Libya' In: *Middle East Critique* 27:3.

[95] For a detailed account of the initial protests, see Vijay Prashad (2012) *Arab Spring, Libyan Winter* (Edinburgh: AK Press) or Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn (eds.) *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath* (London: Hurst).

[96] For a detailed description of the events and dynamics that supported the creation of the NTC (National Transitional Council) and how it took up administrative and military functions, such as distributing weapons and paying salaries, see Peter Bartu (2015) 'The Corridor of Uncertainty: The National Transitional Council's Battle for Legitimacy and Recognition In: Cole and McQuinn (eds.) *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, pp. 31-54.

[97] See United Nations Security Council (2011) Resolution 1970, available online at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_02/20110927_110226-UNSCR-1970.pdf (access date: 15 August 2016) and United Nations Security Council (2011) Resolution 1973, adopted on 17 March 2011 and authorizing a 'no-fly zone' over Libya, available online at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_03/20110927_110311-UNSCR-1973.pdf (access date: 15 August 2016).

providing ‘any necessary means’ and establishing a no-fly zone over Libya in support of the NTC. A few days later, twelve countries started the military operation ‘Odyssey Dawn,’ lead by North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), in support of the rebels. While the UNSC Resolution 1973 did not allow foreign troops to occupy the country, Arab Gulf (Qatar) [98] and Western (UK and France)[99] countries quickly began to provide military and logistical support – in the form of weapons and training - to the rebels.

Starting as an uprising, those protests turned quickly into a civil war, which continued for eight months with the support of NATO military might until the collapse of al-Jamāhīrīyah in October 2011. While the rebels’ capture and killing of Mu’ammar Qadhdhafi marked the end of a forty-two years’ rule, the civil war continued. Elections took place in 2012, but stability and democracy got lost in a spiral of chaos and violence. International and, particularly, Western powers had smuggled weapons to random groups on the sole basis of their opposition to Qadhdhafi. The unrestricted support turned those ‘rebels’ groups into powerful power brokers, or militias, in the aftermath of the conflict. During the stages of data collection and analysis, two separate governments were struggling to control the Eastern and Western region of the country, while numerous militias kept operating with impunity. The situation remains unchanged.

4.5 Conclusion

The chapter offered a contextualization of al-Jamāhīrīyah, focusing on the main historical developments that shaped the dynamics of power and resistance of the regime. It showed how al-Fatḥ Revolution in 1969 emerged as a resistant movement challenging the power of a dysfunctional and Western-allied monarchy. Its success lied in how it captured the sentiments of the majority of the population, drawing on a Pan-Arab and anti-colonial ideology. Having overthrown the monarchy, the revolution was followed by the uncontested rise to power of Mu’ammar Qadhdhafi, and the transformation of Libyan society according to the socialist and secular directives outlined in his philosophical pamphlet ‘The Green Book.’ While the launch

[98] Ian Black (2011) ‘Qatar admits sending hundreds of troops to support Libya rebels’ In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/oct/26/qatar-troops-libya-rebels-support (access date: 15 August 2016).
[99] BBC (2011) ‘British military officers to be sent to Libya,’ available online at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-13132654 (access date: 15 August 2016).

of ‘The Republic of the Masses’ [al-Jamāhīrīyah] in 1977 sanctioned this process, Qadhdhafi’s ascendancy gradually translated into a radical and repressive structure of power, particularly with the creation of the Revolutionary Committees. The chapter demonstrated the importance of the power struggle between Libya and the West. By nationalising the oil industry or supporting ‘revolutionary’ movements worldwide, Qadhdhafi framed al-Fatḥ as a revolution determined to challenge the hegemony of Western imperialism. Western countries, consequently, tried to discipline and overthrew the regime in different manners. Mutual tensions reached their apex with the imposition of international sanctions over Libya, being accused of the Lockerbie bombing.

The chapter, moreover, looked at how the imposition of international sanctions both followed and coincided with a period of economic instability due to the decline of oil revenues, which represented the main source of income for al-Jamāhīrīyah. Under international and domestic pressure, the regime found it necessary to launch a program of liberalization and privatization of the economy, whose implementation took place outside the rule of law. By relying on mechanisms of patronage and corruption, these measures triggered a reconfiguration of the existing power structure, benefiting, in particular, those military-security officers close to the leadership. They, nonetheless, unveiled the existence of social inequalities and raised more popular discontent, which unfolded throughout the 1990s, particularly among armed Islamists groups in the East of the country. Losing legitimacy, the regime decided to re-approach the international community, accepting the request of the US and UK over Lockerbie and renouncing to the WMD programme following the invasion of Iraq in 2003. While such a rapprochement raised hopes of domestic reforms, it also unveiled an internal struggle of power among two opposing groups, linked to Saif al-Islam and the ‘old security-guard’ respectively. In such a situation, popular protests started in Libya in February 2011, quickly turning into a full-fledged civil war with the ‘rebels’ backed up by the international community. Eight months later, in October 2011, Qadhdhafi was killed and al-Jamāhīrīyah fell. The country, nonetheless, spiralled into a state of lawlessness, instability and violence that continues to simmer along.

By providing a state-narrative of struggles of power and resistance, the chapter showed how al-Jamāhīrīyah often relied on the use of violence to hold and wield power. This history of authoritarianism suggests turning first to a recurring theme of the respondents’ accounts of their everyday experiences: violence, fear, and surveillance.

5. Everyday Politics of Violence, Fear and Surveillance

This chapter focuses on discussing the first thematic findings of the study, namely how the interviewees experienced and perceived power in the everyday life as violence, surveillance and fear. The analysis draws on the conceptual tools of Michel Foucault, Sara Ahmed and Slavoj Žižek (See Chapter 2 Section 4.2) in order to provide the broader significance of the findings as well as its theoretical implications. The discussion on the theme is divided into four subthemes: The first theme 'Disciplinary Society in Formation' presents how the interviewees' narratives reveal a culture of fear and suspicion since the early 1980s, passing from fathers to sons. The second one 'Enemies of the Revolution' outlines the interviewees' perception of the increasing sense of regime violence and surveillance, as well as social suspicion, in relation to religious activities and practices in the 1990s. The third theme 'Loyalty and Surveillance' navigates the role of the informant and the quotidian practice of 'reporting,' as discussed by the interviewees. The fourth theme 'A Changing Atmosphere?' examines how the narratives capture the functioning of surveillance in al-Jamāhīrīyah during the 2000s. The conclusion summarizes the main argument of the chapter and how it contributes to this study. The following is a detailed discussion of the subthemes that emerged.

5.1 Disciplinary Society in Formation: from Father to Son

> I remember when I was a kid, precisely in that moment I and my family broke the fast during Ramadan, we switched on the TV and they were showing some people being hanged. My father immediately switched the TV off. Nothing happened randomly; Qadhdhafi planned it. He knew that everybody was going to be there, looking at the television, because it is a moment where you sit down with your family, and he really wanted everybody to see it.[1]

In 1984, during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, the Libyan regime had decided to televise the public execution of Sadiq Hamed Shwehdi[2] together with other 11 men, who were

[1] Author Interview, Hakim, 32 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[2] Cameron Robertson, Mustafa Khalili and Mona Mahmood (2011) 'Libya archive reveals pictorial history of Gaddafi's brutal reign – video' [2:01-4:55] In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/video/2011/jul/18/libya-muammar-gaddafi (access date: 10 October 2016).

considered 'political opponents,' in a basketball arena at the University of Benghazi.[3] This was not the first public display of state violence against 'enemies of the revolution' by al-Jamāhīrīyah. For instance, in January and April 1976, a student unrest took place at the Universities of Benghazi and Tripoli, while dissatisfaction was growing among wealthy and old-established urban families whose power had declined since 1969.[4] On 7 April 1976,[5] a revolutionary military court staged the public execution of several students who went down to the street protesting against Qadhdhafi's call to 'take over the universities' in order to turn student unions into revolutionary organizations.[6] Salah's childhood memories of 1984 are particularly important because during that same year al-Jamāhīrīyah faced important threats. For instance, an Islamist political group, the exiled political opposition movement 'National Front of Salvation for Libya,' made an attempt on Qadhdhafi's life. In response, al-Jamāhīrīyah state television screened the demolition of the house of Muḥammad Yūsuf al-Maqaryif, founder of the same movement.[7] The public hangings of 1984, therefore, were not the first public

[3] Other executions also took place in 1984, such as the hangings of Ali Sassi Zekri and Ahmad Sulaiman in the city of Nalut on 2nd February 1984, see YouTube (2013) 'I'dām al-shahīd muḥammad sa'īd al-shībānī 1984 (jabal naffūsah) tumzīn lībyā' [The execution of the martyr muhammad sa'id al-shibani 1984 (nafusa mountain) tumzin libya], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0jH24UNYjEs (access date: 22 August 2017); or the execution of Muhammad Saeed al-Shabani in the city of Nafusa Mountain on 6th April 1984, see YouTube (2013) 'Hukm al-i'dām 'alá sāsī zikrī wa-aḥmad sulaymān / lībyā madīnat nālūt 1984' [The execution verdict of sasi zikri and ahmad sulayman / libya nalut city 1984], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dc_E47IZ7Nk (access date: 22 August 2017); six military officers and two civilians were also executed in the month of Ramadan in 1997, see Yehudit Ronen (1997) 'Libya' In: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (ed.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey XXI* (Westview Press), pp. 545-546; and David Zucchino (2011) 'Ramadan brings back bitter memories for many Libyans' In: *Los Angeles Times*, available online at: http://articles.latimes.com/2011/jul/31/world/la-fg-libya-hangings-20110731 (access date: 7 October 2015).

[4] See Gideon Gera (1977) 'Libya' In: Colin Legum; Haim Shaked; Jacqueline Dyck (eds.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey: Volume One 1976-77* (New York: Holmes and Meier Publishers Inc.), p. 533.

[5] Following such an incident, the regime continued to trial 'enemies of the revolution' on this same date. For more information on the political relevance of this day, see United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2003) 'Libya: The significance of 7 April: whether it is a day on which dissidents are hanged and if this practice has been in existence since 1970,' available online at: http://www.refworld.org/docid/3f7d4dc238.html (access date: 10 October 2017); al-Watanona, '7 April 1976',' available online at: http://www.libya-watanona.com/libya/7apr76c.htm (access date: 10 October 2017); Tasbeeh Herwees (2011) 'Libyans Remember April 7th As A Day Of Rage And Grief,' In: *NeonTommy*, available online at:http://www.neontommy.com/news/2011/04/april-7th (access date: 09 October 2017); Nicholas Hagger (2009) *The Libyan Revolution: Its Origins and Legacy* (Ropley: Orca Books) , pp. 107-8.

[6] In this regard, see the 2014 movie '*Road to Bāb al-'Azīzīyah*,' which describes the journey to access the leadership compound through oral histories of those who attempted the military coup. An extract is on YouTube (2014) 'Kalimat al-fidā'ī 'arif al-mahdī faraj fakhīl – fīlm "al-ṭarīq ilá bāb al-'azīzīyah 1984 [The speech of the fighter arif mahdi faraj fakhil – film: the road to bāb al-'azīzīyah 1984], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x5GEq1rtcL0 (access date: 10 January 2016).

[7] YouTube (2013) 'Fīdiyū nādir li-jarīmat hadm manzil al-munāḍil muḥammad yūsuf al-maqaryif fi banghāzī 1984' [A rare video showing the destruction of the house of the fighter, muhammad yusuf al-maqaryif in benghazi 1984], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XTXAhhVVL3c (access date: 10 October 2016).

demonstration of government power unleashed against all those who opposed its revolutionary legitimacy.

The State relied on the public display of violence toward those who claimed to oppose the underlying principles of its power structure in order to define what I call the 'parameters of the permissible.' It aims to draw the boundaries of what people can or might do, how they can do it and what are the risks and penalties they might incur if they violate those parameters. Al-Jamāhīrīyah's use of public violence also reaffirms a conception of power that poses the State as the sole authority having the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a given geographical area. The regime relies on spectacular uses of violence in order to instill fear and control its people but the exercise of its power cannot only depend on them; [8] rather it requires a capacity to maintain constantly people under its subordination, being able to discipline their conduct at the level of the everyday.

While this narrative exposes how the interviewee experienced power in its crude and visible manifestation, demonstrating the brutality of al-Jamāhīrīyah, other interviews describe the quotidian as a sphere permeated by fear, suspicion and surveillance, providing rare insights into the everyday practices during al-Jamāhīrīyah in the 1980s. These narratives entail childhood memories of the interviewees and they describe how fear and surveillance sipped in their most private environments, such as house and family. The interviewees describe how their parents taught them to be careful and afraid, offering sketches of a 'disciplinary society in formulation.'

> Our parents used not to speak about politics in front of us. When – as children – we used to say something wrong, they would warn us not to repeat that in front of other children. They would tell us: 'They might take us away; they might bring us to prison! Don't say those things!' So you can see that, even as children, we had to be very careful, fear was everywhere. It was like a big prison.[9]

The narrative of Mansour hints to a sense of fear that passed from one generation to another. It describes the everyday as an experience of omnipresent fear, as a 'big prison,' showing how the state combined the use of brutal force with surveillance and discipline. Another interviewee, Rajab, also describes this sense of surveillance over his life during the 1980s:

[8] See also the case of Ba'athist Iraq and what Kanan Makiya writes in relation to the public use of violence: "it is a powerful political force and should never be underestimated; but if it stops there, it is shallow and ultimately transitory." Makiya (1998) *Republic of Fear: The Politics of Modern Iraq* (Berkley: University of California Press), p. 59.
[9] Author Interview, Mansour, 40 years old, Durham, September 2014.

> At that time, in the 80s, when there were the anniversaries of Qadhdhafi's revolution, he always gave speeches. We always listened to them but you could not criticize him, not even in front of your mother or your father. Maybe there was somebody behind the wall – they would say - listening to us in that moment.[10]

Such a sense of surveillance and fear creates a situation where people feel constantly observed and scrutinized without knowing or being able to prove otherwise. The regime controlled the population through a dual mechanism: on the one hand, it would make people feel constantly observed; on the other hand, it disenabled them to verify fully whether someone was watching over them. While Foucault argues that surveillance, as a modality of power, appeared in order to replace the use of violence, it is important to stress how disciplinary mechanisms functioned vis-à-vis the use of brutal force in al-Jamāhīrīyah. Surveillance did not replace violence but emerged as both an effect and a supporting mechanism to the regime violence.[11] Those narratives show how power in al-Jamāhīrīyah reiterated its structure in the everyday, relying on a mutual combination of open ceremonies of violence and subtler processes of subjection and, ultimately, discipline. Rajab's narrative echoes many other oral histories that, in retrospect, remember stories of fathers who used to remind constantly their children how careful they had to be in order to avoid dangerous consequences.

For instance, Emad narrates a childhood memory of fear that describes the reaction of his father when he started playing a cassette of a very famous Egyptian cleric, Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Kishk, in such a high volume that anybody in the street could hear it. The father, who was sitting outside of the house, instantly came in, slapped Emad and shat everything down, saying:

> Would you like me to be killed?[12]

Although Emad could not comprehend what was happening at that time, he also reflects on the reasons that led his father to react in such a manner:

> He felt responsible to protect his family. I am sure he was speaking about politics with his friends, but not with us […] since we were children, we grew up being afraid of the regime. Qadhdhafi knew that his people would rebel against him, which is why he wanted us to be afraid of him. If a difference exists with the new

[10] Author Interview, Rajab, 35 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
[11] See Laleh Khalili and Jillian Schwedler (2010) 'Introduction' in: Laleh Khalili and Jillian Schwedler (eds.) *Policing and Prisons in the Middle East: Formations of Coercion* (London: Hurst).
[12] Author Interview, Emad, 33 years old, Hull, September 2015.

> generation is that they are much more confident than we are. We were taught to be afraid.[13]

The narrative of Emad discloses several important points. First, the reaction of his father to the loud sound of a tape playing a speech[14] from Shaykh ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd Kishk[15] stresses how al-Jamāhīrīyah's banned and treated any alternative ideological and political activities. In this case, the 'transgressive' nature of Shaykh ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd Kishk's tape relates to his powerful speeches and sermons in which he used to criticise the formation and condition of Arab secular states, such as al-Jamāhīrīyah.[16] Second, this narrative underlines how the older generation of fathers taught their children 'to be afraid' and avoid discussing politics. This also shows how the formation of a 'culture of fear' took place through a capillary control of the public and private sphere of the everyday life.

These narratives not only suggest how people internalized fear and violence, but also how they disciplined themselves and, most importantly, transmitted those values to their siblings 'from father to son', creating a generational culture of fear and surveillance. These self-censorship mechanisms entailed any possible action that contradicted the revolutionary legitimacy of al-Jamāhīrīyah. For instance, Hamza refers in a specific manner to politics:

> As a grown up, I now understand why my father - with a cousin of the same age - always used to speak quietly, away from anybody else. In addition, if I tried to get close to them, he used to say 'Hamza, go away!' At that time, I could not understand why I can sit with them sometimes and why I cannot other times…because they were talking about politics.[17]

The spatial distance from his son and the silent talk of Hamza's father, although one can also interpret them as measures the father takes to protect his child, stem from a sense of fear that controls subjects, assuring they respect those parameters of the permissible set up by the State, thus disciplining them. Moreover, Hamza's narrative conveys, as much as other interviewees

[13] Ibid.
[14] Listening to speeches/sermons of politically contested clerics was a practice diffused in other countries of the region, see Charles Hirschkind (2001) 'The Ethics of Listening: Cassette-Sermon Audition in Contemporary Egypt' In: *American Ethnologist* 28:3, pp. 623-649.
[15] For more information on Shaykhh ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd Kishk, see also see Andrew Hammond (2007) *Popular Culture in the Arab World: Art, Politics and the Media* (Cairo: American University in Cairo), p. 90.
[16] Many of Shaykhh ʻAbd al-Ḥamīd Kishk's sermons openly criticizes Qadhdhafi's politics can still be found on YouTube (2011) 'Shaykh kishk yafḍaḥ muʻammar al-qadhdhāfī' [Shaykh kishk exposes the truth about muammar qadhdhafi], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z3OX3asZtHc (access date: 12 October 2016).
[17] Author Interview, Hamza, 33 years old, Hull, March 2015.

had expressed, another central element: fear. Interpreting his father's behaviour only in retrospect, Hamza's words point out how the political nature of fear enabled a subject to foresee future prospects, thus it strictly links fear to the anticipation of hurt and injury, as Emad and others also had discussed.

The work of Michel Foucault has a tendency to give too much authority to power in its rational form, disregarding the emotional role fear plays as a technology of governance. The narratives above evidence that the emotional state of fear, as Sara Ahmed explains, also functioned as a mechanism of power that disciplined people during al-Jamāhīrīyah.[18] Fear involved an anticipation of hurt or injury by the regime in the future, making people live their present as an intense bodily experience,[19] what Ahmed also calls 'the futurity of fear.' While the previous narratives elaborate on this dynamic, the following ones strengthen further such an argument, indicating how fear occupied a central place in everyday family interactions. Nabil recounts how a seemingly funny and innocent comment could also trigger dangerous consequences. Every night at 9 o'clock in the evening, al-Jamāhīrīyah state television broadcasted a program where a presenter read extracts from 'The Green Book.' As Nabil says, Qadhdhafi's philosophical pamphlet – at times -contained obvious ideas, such as 'Women are female; men are male' or 'Men do not have a menstruation cycle'.[20] These moments vexed Nabil, who would then approach his father about the usefulness of such teachings:

> 'Why can't Libyan people understand this? Why do we need to listen to it every night?' Do you know what my father always replied? 'Nabil do not dare to speak like that!' He was afraid, careful because our neighbour was a police officer. Maybe, if we would speak louder, he could hear us.[21]

The narrative described an interaction between a son and his father, portraying the latter as 'careful' and 'afraid.' It catches the fundamental aspects of an emerging disciplinary society during al-Jamāhīrīyah, where subjects fear violence, and it outlines how criticisms and challenges to the ideas and stature of Qadhdhafi were red lines fraught with danger. Mukhtar also recounts a story from his school days in the 1980s. During a lecture from the module reserved to the study of the Green Book, the teacher compared Qadhdhafi and his companions to the Prophet Muhammed and the Sahabah. Mukhtar intervened and reprimanded the teacher

[18] Sara Ahmed (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), p. 71.
[19] Ibid, p.65.
[20] Muammar Al Gathafi (2005) *The Green Book* (Reading: Ithaca Press), p. 65.
[21] Author Interview, Nabil, 35 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.

for such a comment because it contradicted one of the basic teachings of the Holy Qur'an, which states that no human can assume the status of the Prophet. While the teacher initially remained silent, an unpleasant surprise was waiting for Mukhtar at home:

> As soon as I came home, my father already knew what had happened in school. They had already notified him and he told me not to do such thing ever again. He really shouted at me, I was terrified because he already knew what happened.[22]

In this case, the father does not simply suggest Mukhtar to remain silent; rather, similar to the case of Emad's narrative on Shaykh 'Abd al-Ḥamīd Kishk's tape, he rebukes the son aloud. Due to the public nature of Mukhtar's criticism of the comparison between Qadhdhafi and the Prophet Muhammed, the father is forced to punish his son, thus reinforcing the disciplinary mechanisms and 'parameters of the permissible' imposed by the State.

The findings demonstrate the emergence of a generational culture of fear, passed from father to son, capturing the embryonic stages of a disciplinary society. Fear became a 'glue' that moved from the public to the private sphere, activating a feeling of constant surveillance that ultimately governed and controlled people. In particular, this section considered the implications of how power reiterated its structure, suppressing emerging dissent and opposition by relying on both open ceremonies of violence and subtler processes of subjection and, ultimately, discipline. The narratives showed how subjects experienced and practiced what I defined the 'parameters of the permissible,' those formations of knowledge and power – revolutionary legitimacy, Qadhdhafi's ideas and stature - whose criticism could bring more dangerous consequences for people. The intrusion of fear from the public sphere into the familial one allowed power to control people through the creation of knowledge, such as the creation of new 'categories' and 'hypotheses' (i.e. 'enemies of the revolution'), which affected how both people and security apparatuses acted.

The following section continues to investigate how the discourse of surveillance and public concern expanded at the level of the everyday life, particularly during the 1990s when al-Jamāhīrīyah found itself confronting concrete political threats, such as the rise of Islamist groups (see Chapter 4 Section 4). Moreover, it argues that the escalation of a climate of fear and surveillance requires comprehending how Western powers accentuated further to escalate

[22] Field Notes, Mukthar, 37 years old, Nottingham, April 2015

these conditions, as they tried to discipline the challenging and revolutionary policies of al-Jamāhīrīyah.

5.2 'Enemies of the Revolution'

In order to understand fear, surveillance and violence, the nature of al-Jamāhīrīyah's international and ideological confrontation with the West (see Chapter 4 Section 2) is important because it influenced how the Libyan government perceived and acted against those who opposed and criticized its policies – 'enemies of the revolution' – in the 1990s. The conflictual relation between the West and Libya already played a relevant role to the early 1980s. For instance, in February 1980[23] the government launched the so-called 'stray dog' (*kelab addhala*) campaign, aiming to 'physically liquidate' all the Libyan dissidents who resided abroad. According to the government, since those opponents left the country and enjoyed Western protection, as well as access to media channels in order to discredit al-Jamāhīrīyah, they were considered 'collaborators' of the West. For these reasons, the trials of 'collaborators' was often televised, as it happened in other revolutionary-led states, such as Iraq, China or the Soviet Union.[24] The most important component of those televised trials was to show the accused men confessing – forcibly or not - in front of the public that Western countries secretly supported their subversive activities. [25] Their confessions validated the security concerns of the regime in front of its population, re-enforced its revolutionary discourse and provided consistent evidence for its mistrust toward the West.

This confrontation became central in the 1990s when the Libyan government faced an increasing level of popular discontent. This was the result of the detrimental socio-economic effects of UN-imposed international sanctions, and the discontent related to the intervention in

[23] As Younis Ali Lahwej comments, the Libyan regime initially called upon dissidents to return home and instructed the Libyan People's Bureaux (Embassies) to facilitate their return. Dissidents dismissed the call, however, as a plan to execute them at home and therefore most chose to continue living in the West, thus the regime launched the liquidation campaign and the Revolutionary Committee members took responsibility for carrying out such assassinations. See Younis Ali Lahwej (1988) *Ideology and Power in Libyan Foreign Policy with Reference to Libyan-American Relations from the Revolution to the Lockerbie Affair* (University of Reading: unpublished PhD dissertation), pp. 319-320.

[24] See: Charles Tripp (2007) 'In the Name of the People': The 'People's Court' and the Iraqi Revolution' (1958-1960) and Julia C. Strauss (2007) 'Accusing Counterrevolutionaries': Bureaucracy and the Theatre of Revolutionary People's Republic of China' (1950-1957) In: Julia C. Strauss and Donald B. Cruise O'Brien (eds.) *Staging Politics: Power and Performance in Asia and Africa* (London: I.B. Tauris), pp. 31-48 and 49-70.

[25] See also Maria Los (2004) 'The Technologies of Total Domination' In: *Surveillance & Society* 2:1, p. 35.

Chad,[26] which turned into a thirteen-year military debacle (1973-1987) and caused the death of almost 2000 Libyans.[27] At this point, al-Jamāhīrīyah regime met resistance and opposition, and several groups tried to challenge its power. In 1993, for instance, forty-two officers from the tribe of Warfalla in Bani Walid, which is located 150 kilometres southeast of Tripoli, attempted a military coup against Qadhdhafi and his leadership. Although the military officers were backed by NFSL, the regime intercepted the coup before its implementation, forcing the same tribe to execute and punish those relatives who had tried to rebel. Another important threat witnessed the complicity of two British secret intelligence agencies - MI6 and MI5 – supporting the Islamist group Libyan Islamic Fighting Force (*al-Jamā'ah al-Islāmīyah al-Muqātilah*),[28] which unsuccessfully challenged the regime throughout the 1990s.[29] This group mainly consisted of Islamist-jihadi fighters who had returned to Britain after their military experience in Afghanistan as mujahedeen, where the US government had trained them in order to fight the Soviet Union. In particular, numerous clashes took place in the Eastern part of Libya, Cyrenaica, and, particularly, in the city of Derna, where most of the LIFG militants resided.

Inevitably, every time a political challenge rose against the regime, questioning its legitimacy and popularity, it provoked a backlash with a mixture of restrictive measures, ranging from further violence to stricter surveillance. For instance, the regime imposed an economic embargo on the so-called 'rebellious' cities, such as Bani Walid and Derna. As one of the interviewees, Marwan, explains, the regime put Bani Walid under a 'local embargo,' preventing the city and its inhabitants from carrying out any activities, such as re-building the road connecting to Tarhouna where many car accidents used to take place due to its deteriorated conditions:

> A group of young people from Bani Walid volunteered to repair the road. However, what happened? Some members of the regime came and decided to stop the road

[26] For further information on the Libyan military intervention in Chad, and its resolution, see: George Joffé (1981) 'Libya and Chad' In: *Review of African Political Economy* 21, pp. 84-102; John Wright (1989) *Libya, Chad and The Central Sahara* (London: Hurst&Co); Jean Claude Gatron (1989) 'La Libye et le tchad devant la cour internationale de Justice?' [Libya and chad in front of the international court of justice] In : *Annuaire français de droit international* [French annuary of international law] 35, pp. 205-215; and Martti Koskenniemi (1994) 'L'affaire du différend territorial tchad/libye' (Territorial dispute between chad/Libya) In : *Annuaire français de droit international* [French annuary of international law] 40, pp. 442-464.
[27] Dirk Vandewalle (2006) *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 132.
[28] See T. J. Coles (2016) *Britain's Secret Wars – how and why the United Kingdom sponsors conflict around the world* (Essex: Clairview Press), pp. 28-29.
[29] Stephen Dorrill (2002) *MI6: Inside the Cover World of Her Majesty's Secret Service* (New York: Touchstone), pp. 793-795.

> works because, as they said, 'They could not trust those young people, they did not know what they could put in the road.'[30]

The regime isolated and punished people in those towns and cities that had tried to rebel, blocking any initiative that would ameliorate their infrastructural conditions or access to goods. Another interviewee, Sufian, remembers how his mother, when she travelled from Zawiya – in the Western region of Libya – to Benghazi – in the East – for family reasons, used to buy several products and take them with her because of the difference in prices:

> You know why? Because a can of oil in Zawiya – in the Western region – was worth like 0.75 LYD (30 pence). In Benghazi, it was 3 LYD. Haircuts also had different prices, I remember my cousins coming to visit Zawiya and comparing how a shave in the West costed 3 dinars, while in Benghazi it was 5. Benghazi was literally under siege, particularly after 1996.[31]

Moreover, in 1996, 1200 inmates disappeared from the Abu Salim prison after riots over worsening food ratios and medical conditions broke out, and up to 2011 the authorities never provided a clear explanation. Since the regime found itself under increasing international and domestic pressure, it decided to launch a violent attack toward all those elements that were trying to destabilize the country, labelling them Western-backed 'reactionary forces,' 'fifth column,'[32] 'stray dogs' or, more simply, 'enemies of the revolution.' The regime combined the use and display of violence together with the imposition of stricter forms of disciplinary mechanisms.[33] As the interviewees recounted, such a manifestation of power concerned, in particular, a specific type of enemies: *zindīq* (pl. *zanādiqah* - meaning heretic). This word derogatorily labelled all those Islamist-inspired groups for whose hunt the regime established a special intelligence-agency, the Office Fighting Heretics (*maktab mukāfaḥat al-zandaqah*), as some of the interviewees pointed out.[34]

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[30] Field Notes, Marwan, 45 years-old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[31] Author Interview, Sufian, 33 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[32] In 1991, the NFSL documents that the Revolutionary Committees had started warning the population of the presence of a fifth column made up of 'decadent self-seeking opportunists.' See NFSL (1992) *Libya under Gaddafi and the NFSL Challenge: An Anthology of the NFSL News reports 1989-1992*, p. 215.
[33] In 1997, Amnesty International documented the use of violence, extrajudicial detention and disappearances of Libyan national abroad and inside the country. See Amnesty International (1997) *Libya: Gross Human Rights Violations amid Secrecy and Isolation*, available online at: https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/MDE19/008/1997/en/ (access date: 08 October 2017).

The narrative of Hussein offers an insight into how the regime relied on the public display of violence while fighting those groups:

> The regime tied their dead bodies to cars, which would then tour around Derna, and people were forced to watch. They would go to the owners of the shops, to the people working in the banks and force them to come outside, into the streets, in order to watch such disgusting scenes. My father watched this scene, I did not but I know about it because everybody in Derna knows about it.[35]

The use of brutal violence, as Hussein continues, also functioned together with other mechanisms of control, i.e. normalization of language:

> We could not refer to the picture of those men, who were wanted by the regime, with their names, but we had to say 'This is the picture of a *zindīq*.' We could not use their proper name. We needed to be careful.[36]

Drawing from everyday reality, Hussein indicates two important mechanisms of power in al-Jamāhīrīyah which operated in order to re-affirm and normalize the political discourse of the regime among the population: the display of violence and the 'normalization' of language[37] through the forceful use of the word *zindīq* to describe those people. Following Ahmed's insights on fear, the regime relied on those measures to create a distance between the population and the bodies of the *zanādiqah*. These attempts to distance the population from *zanādiqah* are also present in the official speeches of Qadhdhafi. In several occasions, the Libyan leader associated those 'heretics' to animals who should be slaughtered, exhorting the population to 'kill' them. On 19 July, 1990 Amnesty International reports that Qadhdhafi said:

> If you find among you one who says: *da'wa* or *jihad* or … *ikhwan*,[38] then you should cut his head and throw it in the street as if you find a wolf, a fox or a scorpion.[39]

Similarly, in May 1993, he declared:

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[35] Author Interview, Hussein, 28 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[36] Ibid.
[37] See also Alexei Yurchak (2005) *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press), pp. 47-54.
[38] These three terms are all connected to Islamic-inspired religious groups: *da'wa* (preaching of Islam); *jihad* (holy struggle) and *ikhwan* (brotherhood, as in relation to the Muslim Brotherhood).
[39] Amnesty International (1991) *Summary of Amnesty International's Concerns in Libya*, available online at: https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/200000/mde190011991en.pdf (access date: 08 October 2017).

> If you know anyone who is one of them (*zanādiqah*), then he should be killed and liquidated exactly like a dog – without a trial. Do not be afraid. Nobody will arrest you or put you on trial if you kill a heretic.[40]

In such a climate, where Qadhdhafi's words suggest impunity, if not reward, for those who were willing to capture and confront the 'enemies of the revolution,' it is possible to comprehend what the interviewees describe as the circulation of a tighter system of surveillance over their lives. For instance, Salah recounts an anecdote that took place in the aftermath of an attack on the car of the security forces of the regime in Derna. The internal intelligence (*al-amn al-dākhilī*) showed up at his house, took his father and put him into jail for a month because he possessed the same car of the attackers:

> At that time, my father also had a Mitsubishi and, two weeks earlier, he had brought the car to the mechanic in order to change its colour. As soon as he went to pick up the car and came back home, the internal intelligence arrived to my house to seize the car and arrest him […] he stayed in prison for almost a month.[41]

This anecdote shows how the political preoccupations of the regime translated into a frenzy of efforts at surveillance. Looking for any possible sign of dissent or affiliation to political opposition groups, the regime jailed Musa's father for a month for what might appear as an ill-fated coincidence. However, this is an effect of the functioning of surveillance in panopticism that, as Foucault argues, takes place not at the level of what one does but of what one might do. Surveillance tends increasingly to individualize the author of the act,[42] expanding alarmingly its grasp on the potentialities (might) rather than materiality (do) of its actions.

Narratives revealed that the regime crack-down on the Islamist opposition created a climate of surveillance and suspicion, where those people who 'seemed' to embrace a 'too extreme' lifestyle ended up behind bars or under severe scrutiny. In particular, interviewees pointed out how in the 1990s *zindīq* became synonymous with 'to grow a beard' or 'to pray at dawn (*fajr*).' During a long conversation, Abdul Hakim discussed a quotidian moment of life that provides important insights into how the secret services (*mukhābarāt*) relied on and made use of these

[40] In: Yehudit Ronen (1993) 'Libya' In: Amy Ayalon (ed.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey XVII* (Boulder: Westview Press), pp. 538-539.
[41] Author Interview, Salah, 27 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[42] See Michel Foucault (1994) 'The Ethics of Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom' In: Paul Rainbow (ed.) *Essential Works of Michel Foucault: 1954-1984 Vol. 1* (New York: The New Press), p. 71. For a similar argument, see also Nancy D. Campbell (2004) 'Technologies of Suspicion: Coercion and Compassion in Post-Disciplinary Surveillance Regime' In: *Surveillance and Society* 2:1, pp. 78-92.

tiny details. In 1999, Abdul Hakim studied at the University of Derna and the security situation of the town remained unsettled due to the ongoing clash between regime forces and Islamist groups. One day, on his way back from the university, a man started tailing him until he finally approached him. In a state of fear and panic, Abdul Hakim immediately realized that the man worked for a security-related agency and soon found out why he had been stopped:

> My heart was pumping so much; I was so scared. So, what happened? He introduced himself as a member of the security service and then said 'Your trousers are shorter than usual and you have some beard.'[43]

The length of a pair of trousers and facial-hair turned Abdul Hakim into a potential 'enemy of the revolution' to be scrutinized, why? As the interviewee recounts the episode, he admits that:

> At that time, I did not even know what that sentence was supposed to mean but it remained stuck in my head […] he gave me a warning. If he reports you, the university can kick you out; it is a shame for all your family. After a couple of days, a friend of mine had a similar situation. He had a long beard, so they stopped him and asked the same questions.[44]

It is important to note how Abdul Hakim's encounter takes place in Derna, a city the regime sieged and embargoed during the fighting against the LIFG, and how the agent applies certain filters ('shorter than usual trousers' and 'some beard') as means to identify people who follow an 'extremely religious' lifestyle, thus inclined to support Islamist groups. For devout Muslim men, whose lifestyle follows strictly the sayings – called Hadith - attributed to the Prophet Muhammed, it is considered *haram*, prohibited by religion, to let any garment they wear hang down beneath their ankles, thus wearing more 'European'-fashionable trousers.[45] Similarly, it is possible to find religious obligations attributed to the Prophet that require Muslim men to grow their beard.[46]

As Foucault explains, and so it happens in al-Jamāhīrīyah, surveillance functions deductively and preventively;[47] it works through assumed formations and discourses of power and

[43] Author Interview, Abdul Hakim, 34 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Sahih al-Bukhari (n.d.) Volume 7, Book 72, Hadith 678, 686, 694, 696, 697, 743,744. Available online at: https://www.sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_7_72.php (access date: 10 January 2016).
[46] BBC (2010) 'Are beards obligatory for devout Muslim men?', available online at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10369726 (access date: 10 January 2016).
[47] Foucault (1993) *Sorvegliare e punire: nascita della prigione* [Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison] (Torino: Einaudi), p. 225.

knowledge that constitute people as objects of observation and categorization. In this process, where power relies on surveillance in order to prevent, anticipate and thus control the conducts of people, the most mundane and banal aspects of life undergo scrutiny, assuming great political significance. Power is articulated directly on subjects via their quotidian habits and ways of dressing. While the system gathers and manages this information in order to maintain order and prevent crime, it also enables knowledge and power to merge, thus disciplining people.

Thus far, the narratives recounted top-down experiences, entailing the imposition of surveillance from the regime on the people. However, other oral histories describe the internalization of those practices of surveillance and its disciplinary effects on people, such as the story of Mansour and his neighbour. Moving from teenage life to adulthood, Mansour passed from smoking two packs of cigarettes per day, detesting religion and praying, to a more 'balanced' lifestyle. He decided to quit smoking, grow a beard and go to the mosque, but some people began suspecting what might have caused those changes:

> Imagine this old woman, a neighbour who used to come and talk to my mother every day. One day, she comes to my house to visit the family [pausing while laughing], and tells to my mum: 'What happened to Ahmed? Why is he not smoking anymore? I noticed he is growing a beard, going to the mosque every day. Listen to me, tell him to start smoking again and forget about all this, it's better for him' [big laugh].[48]

This narrative suggests that it was not only the regime through its numerous intelligence agencies that had expanded its purview of surveillance, but people continued, as the previous section showed, to internalize those practices of surveillance and reporting.

The following story of Latif illuminates further this point especially as he identified himself as both a member of the RC and a strong supporter of al-Jamāhīrīyah. Latif narrates an anecdote in order to describe the frenzied level of surveillance and control exercised over the population. During the early 2000s, while he was travelling back and forth between Libya and Italy, he had taken part in a routine meeting of the RC in Tripoli. Since those meetings also entailed the discussion of the people's perception of the government's policies, Latif found it appropriate to point out to his fellow colleagues how Qadhdhafi's constant appearance on television via speeches and news outlets posed a concrete risk. It could make the population grow distant and

[48] Author Interview, Mansour, 42 years old, Manchester, September 2015.

bored, thus losing interest in the importance of his political messages. Despite conveying his thoughts for the 'good of the country,' as he told me, two nights later members of the RC paid him a visit and took him to jail in order to find out whether he was planning any subversive activities against the country.[49] Apart from spending a couple of days in jail for no apparent reason, nothing else had happened, but the message such an experience represented for him remained:

> Do you understand now? You could not criticize him [Qadhdhafi], not even among us [the RC].[50]

Fear and suspicion - whether real or imagined – influenced the conduct and rhythms of the quotidian, which, in turn, continued to feed those larger structures of society, even among those who were supposedly the closest supporters of the government. It was not only the secret service that relied on certain formations of power and knowledge to interpret the length of Abdul Hakim's trousers or Latif's criticism. The close neighbour of Ahmed also comments on his smoking and religious habits drawing on those categories. By looking at power as a component of the everyday life, it becomes possible to capture those formations of power and knowledge that people used to 'gauge' and 'see' their quotidian experiences. This also allows grasping those repressed and silenced elements that are 'not seen' in the very act of 'seeing.' One can only understand phrases like 'too short trousers,' 'too long beard' or 'too early prayer' by looking at fear, violence and surveillance as mechanisms that govern and control people.

While this section emphasised one of the most crucial aspects of this expanding system of surveillance, which lies in its capacity to align people suspiciously toward each other, potentially turning everybody into an informer; it is also important to take into account what one of the interviewees describes as:

> Be careful with the notion of 'Police State' in Libya. The system of surveillance worked in both ways. Sometimes people avoided to report because they knew each other. Any system has two sides; they never work only in one direction.[51]

The following section examines how interviewees recounted the other direction of this system of surveillance, unveiling how they perceived people's quotidian participation and negotiation of its functioning.

[49] Author Interview, Latif, 40 years old, Italy, August 2015.
[50] Ibid.
[51] Author Interview, Naji, 33 years old, Reading, September 2015.

5.3 In-Between *takrīr* and *tiltāl*

> While a father is walking around the street with his child; suddenly the child points at a poster of Qadhdhafi and, in front of passersby, says 'Dad, that's the man you always spit on whenever you see him on the TV.' Looking at the passersby, the father replies 'Does anybody know to whom this child belongs?'[52]

Many interviewees provided this joke to explain the effects of surveillance over people's lives. As soon as the child reveals the action of his father in front of passersby, the latter quickly and publicly misrecognizes him. The joke captures how the pervasive atmosphere of control in al-Jamāhīrīyah would make anybody turn against their closest family members. The structure of surveillance functioned in very subtle ways because it seemed to embroil the largest number of people in a reign of fear and terror. This took place on such a scale that, when I tried to understand who was involved in this apparatus or what the profile of a possible informer might be, the answer was, quoting Salim:

> Everybody was reporting. Look, we had many people who were invisible. Sometimes they would pray in the mosque beside me, but they were working in the Revolutionary Committees (*al-lijān al-thawrīyah*) and you did not know. The regime had an invisible army of normal people and they were working very well.[53]

When I started inquiring what people were reporting and who was working as an informant, the answer, as Salim stresses, appeared to be anybody, demonstrating how surveillance functions in order to blur the boundaries between reality and imagination. This aspect echoes what Foucault writes about the Panopticon, a structure where "it does not matter who exercises power … [because] any individual, taken almost at random, can operate this machine,"[54] anybody can become both a potential prisoner and enforcer. In her study on security and surveillance in Gaza under Egyptian rule, Ilana Fedlman draws attention to this same aspect, stressing how "everybody knows that surveillance is happening, but they can't always pinpoint exactly when or by whom."[55]

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[52] Author Interview, Nuri, 46 years old, Hull, March 2015.
[53] Author Interview, Salim, 29 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[54] Foucault, *Sorvegliare e punire*, p. 202.
[55] Ilana Feldman (2015) *Police Encounters: Security and Surveillance in Gaza under Egyptian Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press), p. 58.

Several security agencies existed in Libya during al-Jamāhīrīyah period: Armed Forces; People's Resistance Forces (*qūwāt al-muqāwamah al-sha'bīyah*); Police (*shurṭah*), which became People's Security Forces (*qūwāt al-amn al-sha'bī*) in 1985; al-Jamāhīrīyah Security organisation (*hay'at amn al-jamāhīrīyah*), divided into Internal Security (*al-amn al-dākhilī*) and External Security (*al-amn al-khārijī*); Military Secret Service (*al-istikhbārāt al-'askarīyah*); Revolutionary Committees (*al-lijān al-thawrīyah*); Revolutionary Guard (*al-ḥaras al-thawrī*); The People's Guard (*al-ḥaras al-sha'bī*), which included the Loyal Security Fighters; Purification Committees (*lijān al-taṭhīr*) and the Office Fighting Heretics (*maktab mukāfaḥat al-zandaqah*).[56] Although there is a lack of numerical figures showing how many people worked for these agencies, the findings from the interviews demonstrated that, at the level of the everyday, the most important activity to propagate further an atmosphere of fear and surveillance was the quasi-institution of *takrīr* (report). Interviewees believe that security, military, intelligence or police agencies reported, registered and classified everything in their archives. The words of Emad reflect this aspect, as they describe the difficulties to distinguish real from imagined stories of surveillance and report:

> There were true stories, and there were things that people imagined…because they were afraid. Sometimes, they imagined that somebody was listening to their conversations behind the wall. These stories are like rumours (*isha'a*).[57]

The powerful effects of surveillance lie in its capacity to spread capillary-like into every aspect of society, reinforcing the grip of power over subjects and blurring any distinction between real and imagined threats. However, as many interviews acknowledged the existence of *takrīr* as a common and mundane practice of everyday life, they also discussed how such practice was negotiated. The narrative of Younis, a young man who managed to get hold of some intelligence reports in the aftermath of the 2011 events, is a perfect starting point. Younis describes this anecdote in order to accentuate how such a widespread tactic could be used:

[56] For a well-argued and contextualized description of each agency, apart from the last one that is absent in his study, see Hanspeter Mattes (2004) Conference Paper: 'Challenges to Security Sector Governance in the Middle East: The Libyan Case' In: *Challenges of Security Sector Governance in the Middle East Workshop* (Geneva: Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces), available online at: https://wikileaks.org/gifiles/attach/101/101180_Tribalism%20and%20the%20Libyan%20Military.pdf (access date: 16 October 2016). For a specific look at the role of the Revolutionary Committees, see Hanspeter Mattes (1995) 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Committees' In: Dirk Vandewalle (ed.) *Qadhafi's Libya: 1969-1994* (New York: St Martin's Press), pp. 89-112.

[57] Author Interview, Emad, 33 years old, Hull, September 2015.

> It was about a woman who reported, guess who? Her husband! [pause] to the Internal Security. She had written 'My husband has a farm with two camels but he owns three shops selling milk from camels, and so on…how can he run three shops if he only owns two camels?' Why would you report your husband? Maybe, she had some personal problems with him; nonetheless, she wrote to the Internal Security. Can you imagine? It's crazy, you could not even trust your family members.[58]

Younis interprets this report with shock 'Can you imagine? It's crazy,' highlighting how people could turn each other to the security agencies due to personal problems, such as family disputes, that did not relate to the security concerns of the regime. Younis' narrative echoes what Saif expresses in relation to some reports he also discovered after the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah. The first report alerted the authorities on how a schoolteacher organized the football fixtures between classes. In the report, the informant writes that the teacher labelled each football team by numbers rather than using Qadhdhafi's revolutionary language:

> What the informant wrote was 'I have seen the schedule, and they never called the themes 'al-Fatḥ,' 'al-Ittiḥād' and so on. The informant meant that the teacher never used Qadhdhafi's revolutionary language. Then, he added 'See attached the schedule of the games.' What is that supposed to mean?[59]

Saif also refers to a report where the informant raises doubt over the facial-hair growth of a man whose father opposed the regime:

> The informant wrote 'He was Dr Mustapha's son, and he is growing a beard. He might have become Salafi or something; we should put our eyes on him.' Basically, anybody could write something about you, for any reason.[60]

While those narratives raise important questions, such as 'Who was reporting whom?' 'Were these people working as security agents?' 'What were they reporting?,' they also clarify how people seemed to negotiate the meaning of *takrīr*, showing both ubiquity and ambiguity of 'accusatory' practices and reports in the everyday life.

During the interviews, an important debate emerged that engaged with the question of the loyalty that those who worked as informants felt towards the regime. Such a discussion with

[58] Author Interview, Younis, 34 years old, Italy, August 2015.
[59] Author Interview, Saif, 34 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[60] Ibid.

the interviewees questioned what Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately explore in their study on the practice of denunciation in modern European history, when they write "denunciation lies along the fault line dividing those who find themselves in tension with the state and those who see some of their own identity in the state."[61] The interviewees often called into question to what extent loyalty to and identification with the ideals of the regime guided a person to *takrīr*, to report, to work as an informant. The findings demonstrate that there are numerous reasons that make someone report on somebody else's activities. For instance, the interviewees possessed a unique set of words, mostly deriving from Libyan dialect, to describe informants as subjects who write reports as people in search of benefits, favours or advantages, thus not out of loyalty. The most recurring word was *tiltāl* (informant), but other words also were repeated, such as *guwwād* (pimp), *zimzāk, ligāg* or *farmāt* (informant), and *antīnah,*[62] the latter – in particular – referred to somebody who is always listening to other people's conversations, thus untrustworthy.

These words are not just synonymous of 'informant,' they – most importantly – provide an insight into how and why people acknowledged and participated in the structure of surveillance. For instance, Abdul Aziz describes *tiltāl* as:

> Someone who informs the regime that Matteo, every day, comes to that café and drinks cappuccino. Is it important? No! But he wants to show that he also writes reports for the regime, he wants to be on the safe side.[63]

For Abdul Aziz, *tiltāl* means somebody who writes reports not to harm fellow citizens but in order to be 'on the safe side,' showing his 'fake' loyalty toward the regime. People might act in this manner because they fear the violence of the regime, thus their action aims to avoid its repressive power. They engage pre-emptively with surveillance in order to avoid interdiction; thus 'reporting' becomes a defensive tactic. The social awareness of such an overreaching surveillance[64] had two main interrelated effects: firstly, it enabled people to exert influence, re-

[61] Sheila Fitzpatrick and Robert Gellately (1996) 'Introduction to the Practices of Denunciation in Modern European History' In: Sheila Fiztpatrick & Robert Gellately (eds.) *Accusatory Practices: Denunciation in Modern European History 1789-1989* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 17.
[62] As Ismail explains: They used to say: 'Don't look at him, don't speak close to him because he is antenna.' (Author Interview, Reading, September 2015).
[63] Author Interview, Abdul Aziz, 45 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[64] Those agents assigned to a *murabba'* [square/area] were also in charge of probing the population's mood. This practice, for instance, resembled what Katherine Verdery calls 'mood reports' in Romania under Ceausescu. See Katherine Verdery (2014) *Secrets and Truths: Ethnography in the Archive of Romania's Secret Police* (Budapest: Central European University), p. 163.

orienting[65] the use of those same everyday practices used to control them and secondly, it hindered the creation of political organization and obstructed the possibility of sociality, turning a neighbour (or a wife) into a security agent.

Another interviewee, Ihsan, complicates further the meaning of *tiltāl*, relying on a Libyan saying: 'someone who knows from where to eat the shoulder's meat.'[66] Such culinary metaphor, which captures the shoulder's meat for both its delicacy to the palate and its difficulty to be eaten, describes *tiltāl* as a smart and opportunist person, someone who reports in order to gain something in return. Also, Ali indicates that for some people working as an informant could also provide an opportunity for social mobility:

> Tiltāla are those guys who offer things just for future benefits. They provide information for free in order to get something back.[67]

Samir provides a similar definition, emphasising the existing gap between working as an informant and loyalty toward the regime:

> An informant! But if I tell you that someone is *tiltāl* does not mean that he is supporting Qadhdhafi. *Zimzāk* is the same thing.[68]

Those words and definitions demonstrate that people attempted to escape the machine of surveillance, using it for their own benefits. The interviewees show that people appeared to engage everyday with the practice of report, playing the role of regime's informers/informants but for reasons that did not always coincide with staunch loyalty for the state. They, nonetheless, ended up (re)producing the same structure they were afraid of, becoming part of – and subordinated to – it. They (re)produced the vicious cycle of surveillance as they tried to escape its pervasive grip on their lives.

The importance of these findings lies in demonstrating how people acknowledged and understood the quotidian pervasiveness of surveillance in society, yet their attempts to manoeuvre it only perpetuated such mechanisms of control. In such a situation, where it is prudent for citizens, and satisfactory for the regime, to operate within a set of symbolical

[65] I am borrowing this term from the work of Sara Ahmed, where she describes orientations as those spaces people occupy in relations to objects and people. By studying orientations, we understand the web of power dynamics and social relations that define certain orientations (sexual, political, etc) and how people can re-orient them. See Sara Ahmed (2006) *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Duke: Duke University Press).
[66] Author Interview, Ihsan, 36 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[67] Author Interview, Ali, 34 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[68] Author Interview, Samir, 30 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.

parameters by simulating loyalty through performance, the work of Slavoj Žižek helps to understand how people act 'as if'.[69] This attitude is neither a synonym of loyalty nor approval of the regime's structures and practices, but its effects simultaneously enforce and (re)produce obedience to the dominant hierarchies of power. The narratives provided here, in fact, pinpoint that it did not matter what relevance the subject matter of the report had. It is the act of reporting, that matters, not the substance. The constant flow of information from the people to the regime's security apparatuses fed and (re)produced the atmosphere of surveillance.

While the findings demonstrated that al-Jamāhīrīyah operated through the use of 'an invisible army of normal people,' as Salim described above, resembling a 'Police State' where a secret security complex runs silently and invisibly throughout the whole social texture in search of 'enemies of the revolution' (see *zanādiqah* above); the interviewees also stressed the 'two sides' of surveillance. As Nour describes:

> Look, you have to talk about the two sides. There were people loyal to the regime, from which the Qadhdhafi system will get the benefits, but some people worked for these institutions only for their benefits. So, when they were told to arrest somebody close to them, they would go and talk to them 'Look, don't go to the mosque these days because someone will write a report for you. They will arrest somebody at *fajr*.' […] It is a two-ways system.[70]

Khaled assesses the two ways surveillance operated, highlighting how people also participated in such a structure. In other words, while the interviewees perceived surveillance as a top-down process, where people do not participate but they find themselves captured 'by virtue of being in the orbit of totalitarian control,'[71] they, nonetheless, participated in its (re)production.[72]

This chapter has tried to show that in order to understand the political mechanisms of control of al-Jamāhīrīyah is necessary to explore the dimension of the everyday life, as well as those international dynamics that influenced Libya vis-à-vis the West. The following section presents how the interviewees' perception of quotidian mechanism of fear and surveillance changed when al-Jamāhīrīyah embarked on a process of international rehabilitation since the late 1990s.

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[69] Slavoj Žižek (1987) *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso).
[70] Author Interview, Nour, 38 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
[71] Los, 'The Technologies of Total Domination,' p. 28.
[72] This passage, as Chapter 8 will show, speaks back to the current situation of Libya as triggered by the 2011 events and how Western countries too easily divided Libyan society in 'pro-regime' versus 'rebels.' Such distinctions fail to grasp the complexities of power mechanisms.

5.4 A Changing Atmosphere?

Since the late 1990s, after almost seven years of UN-imposed economic sanctions and a tug of war with the West over Lockerbie, al-Jamāhīrīyah's internal stability only looked shakier (see section 4.4). In need to rehabilitate the country at the international level and rejuvenate the domestic economy, the regime tried to break away from the sanctions, ending a long period of isolation and accepting Western political requests. In 2003 Qadhdhafi also announced al-Jamāhīrīyah's renouncement of its WMD programme and the regime started sorting out internal human rights-related issues. This period (see Chapter 4 Section 5) witnessed the rise of political figures with reformist ideas in relation to human-rights and the economy, such as Saif Al-Islam, Shukri Ghanem and Mustafa Abdul-Jalil. The findings show that the everyday perception of fear and surveillance among the interviewees reflected the changing political atmosphere in the country. For instance, Omar divides al-Jamāhīrīyah's historiy into three decades:

> In the 80s, the regime was very strong, and I call this period 'closed mind.' Nobody who had different ideas was acceptable. In the 90s, if the person was going to the mosque 3-4 times per day or to pray at *fajr* – meaning 5'o clock in the morning –, they would put him into prison. Then, the situation changed, got much better when Libya tried to return to the global arena.[73]

Omar describes the changing approach of the regime vis-à-vis dissent and political opposition, stressing how the 'the situation changed, got much better' when al-Jamāhīrīyah's long period of international isolation ended. Similarly, Ali compares the 1990s as a period where 'just a word could have killed you' to the late 2000s, where the system of overarching surveillance began to wane:

> If you want to compare that period to the late 2000s – let us say 2006-2010 - everybody was talking about Qadhdhafi, people were cursing him. Even the security organizations, such as the RC, did not really care or worry about what was

[73] Author Interview, Omar, 32 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.

being said or who was talking about Qadhdhafi. You could talk about whatever you wanted to talk about.[74]

These interviewees suggest that the political rapprochement of Libya with the West also benefited the domestic and mundane perception of surveillance, since those same actions that seemed unconceivable in the past, such as criticizing or challenging Qadhdhafi, had become acceptable.

Those narratives, however, do not provide a full picture of what the interviewees recounted about violence, surveillance and fear in Libya at the beginning of the 21st century. Other interviewees, in fact, re-affirm how both the atmosphere of fear and surveillance continued to govern and control their everyday lives. For instance, Hamid, who used to work in one of the institutions established by Saif al-Islam, the National Development Economic Council, discusses how – on his way to work – he passed every day in front of Bāb al-'Azīzīyah,[75] where two military officers stood 'with guns and everything.' He recalls this quotidian action pointing out to his emotional state:

> There was fear inside my heart; I was not comfortable. Even though I was just driving [laughing], I could not guarantee what would have happened. If there were a crash, maybe they would have shot me. I don't know what I had in mind…maybe, it was the work of imagination, like propaganda…because it was a dictatorship.[76]

Hamid's narrative captures, as explained previously, what Ahmed calls the 'futurity of fear' in its capacity to orient bodies toward each other, governing subjects and their actions. This circulation of emotions seems to contradict what those interviews presented above suggested, which is the rise of a more relaxed atmosphere and the possibility to criticize freely the regime. The narrative also suggests that the subject matter of Hamid's preoccupations were not so important. What matter is how fear functions, as an internalised emotional state, disciplines people. In other words, his narrative re-affirms the power of disciplinary power, which people had experienced since the 1980s, as well as the difficulties to overcome such an internalised sense of suspicion and fear.

Other interviewees indicate that the level and functioning of surveillance were not as dangerous as they used to be in the previous years, but they nonetheless existed and came out, for instance,

[74] Author Interview, Ali, 35 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.
[75] Bāb al-'Azīzīyah is the residence of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi.
[76] Author Interview, Hamid, 34 years old, Reading, September 2015.

in academic contexts. Murad and Ibrahim describe a very similar anecdote, although their experiences took place in 2003 and 2006 respectively. In the first case, Murad clarifies that his research did not contain any criticism toward the regime, rather it showed that since 1974 al-Jamāhīrīyah did not raise public salaries, while the costs of living raised of 200%.[77] Therefore, his presentation recommended the regime to upgrade public salaries in two phases, 100% immediately and 100% gradually. As he reached the end of his research-presentations, a man approached him with a threatening tone:

> This guy – probably from the security - was not even listening to me, he was rubbish. He wanted to switch the focus from research to politics and he came to me saying: 'Why are you saying this? Are you against the government? Salaries are controlled by a resolution of the government in 1974.'[78]

Murad appears frustrated because no matter what his research work indicated, the man was 'not even listening to me' but was only interested in his political views vis-à-vis the regime. In other words, he experiences this moment of everyday life as a reminder of the larger machinery of surveillance. In addition, when Murad states that this man was 'probably from the security,' he reveals the power of fear and suspicion in orienting people toward each other, turning everybody into a potential informer.

Similarly, Ibrahim recounted the day he offered a presentation on the lack of jobs and the rise of unemployment in Libya, which was welcomed by a threatening:

> Why are you doing this? Are you against Qadhdhafi?[79]

While both interviewees seemingly convey how surveillance remained active and functioning in the 2000s, it is important to note how these episodes also reveal a gradual change of the so-called 'parameters of the permissible.' Ibrahim and Murad, in fact, deliver a presentation on the economic needs of the country, thus positioning themselves into a larger and ongoing debate to reform the economy and human rights status of Libya. Their suggestions, however, are treated as possible threats or criticisms towards the regime. In this regard, these episodes also signal a changing atmosphere. While they do not indicate the reduction of the level of surveillance, they show how regime attempts at surveillance included proposals of reforms. In

[77] See Waniss Otman and Erling Karlberg (2007) *The Libyan Economy: Economic Diversification and International Repositioning* (Berling: Springer-Verlag), p. 132 (for an explanation of Law n. 15 of 1981) and pp. 142-145 (for a debate on the increase of public sector wage vis-à-vis decrease of state-subsidies).
[78] Author Interview, Murad, 40 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
[79] Author Interview, Ibrahim, 36 years old, Hull, March 2015.

other words, they capture the underlying tensions that characterised al-Jamāhīrīyah's last decade, where the 'old guard' opposed the reformist camp led by Qadhdhafi's son, Saif al-Islam (see Chapter 4 Section 4).

The findings show that interviewees' perception and experience of fear and surveillance mirrors the contradictory political stance of al-Jamāhīrīyah in its last decade. While interviewees experienced a reduced level of surveillance in their everyday life, they also continued to discuss fear – whether real or imagined – as a key component of the regime. Similarly, while the regime took important steps in order to ameliorate its international position, it also continued to mistrust and fear the interference of Western powers in the national affairs of the country (Chapter 4 Section 4). As shown above (see Chapter 5 Section 3), the interviewees' perception and functioning of surveillance in the everyday also requires an understanding of the international dynamics that characterized al-Jamāhīrīyah vis-à-vis the West and how those affected its circulation.

5.5 Conclusion

The chapter examined how power relied on the use of violence to suppress internal dissent, and fostered an atmosphere based on fear and suspicion among the population, which – as the narratives displayed - passed from father to son, from one generation to another since the early 1980s. The conceptual insights of Michel Foucault explained how practices and modalities of power as surveillance functioned as a process working from below, self-disciplining people, in quotidian experiences and encounters. While people's perception of power resembled what Foucault calls the 'Panopticon' structure, where subjects feel constantly observed and watched, those mechanisms did not fully replace the public use of violence by the regime. Moreover, following Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of fear, the chapter shows how violence and surveillance also generate a sense of fear that operates in the everyday in a twofold manner: firstly, it aligns subjects towards each other in a suspicious manner, re-enforcing the regime's control over the population, and secondly, it clouds any possibility to distinguish between 'real' and 'imagined' threats and dangers. The findings demonstrate such insights in relation to the 1990s, when the rise of an Islamist challenge against the regime became more prominent.

While those insights depict al-Jamāhīrīyah as a 'dictatorial' and 'oppressive' regime, unwilling to make room for any form of dissent, the chapter also took into account how the interviewees

discussed the role of the informant and the practice of *takrīr* (report). It showed how they acknowledged and disapproved of the existence of such a system of surveillance but, as they tried to escape it, they only kept (re)producing its vicious cycle. The chapter examined how the international struggle of power and resistance between Libya and the West (Chapter 4 Section 2) also affected the dynamics of violence, fear and surveillance within the country. Threatened and confronted by the West, the regime began equating and perceiving any internal threats as a Western-sponsored attempt to overthrow the 'revolutionary legitimacy' of al-Fatḥ. This, in turn, re-affirmed the regime's ideological positioning and influenced its treatment of any political challenge, whether real or imagined. The dynamics of al-Jamāhīrīyah's international confrontation, as the chapter argues, also help to understand the interviewees' perception of surveillance in the 2000s, which appears as reduced but present. The findings mirror the regime's contradictory attempts to break away from and reform its international and domestic policies (see Chapter 4 Section 3).

The next chapter considers how the ambiguous role of the everyday practice of life in negotiating and (re)producing power.

6. The Ambiguous Nature of Everyday Life

This chapter examines the second theme of the study, namely the ambiguous nature of everyday actions in negotiating and (re)producing power, whose findings intertwine with the previously explored theme of everyday violence, fear and surveillance. The analysis draws on the conceptual tools of Sara Ahmed, Achille Mbembe, Slavoj Žižek, and James C. Scott (section 2.4.2 and 2.4.3) in order to navigate the ambivalent nature of people's quotidian interaction in al-Jamāhīrīyah as well as its theoretical implications. While the thematic discussion is divided into four subthemes, each one of them sheds light on people's everyday experiences of the structure and symbols of al-Jamāhīrīyah itself. The first theme 'The Cult of Personality' outlines how interviewees perceived and experienced the figure of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi. The second theme 'The Green Book' zooms into Qadhdhafi's philosophical ideas, assessing how interviewees related and interacted with them. The third theme 'The Revolutionary Committees' examines the everyday forces at work that motivated people to join the group that mostly embodied al-Jamāhīrīyah's ideals. The last theme 'Corruption and *Wasta*' examines how the interviewees' narratives reveal the circulation of a quotidian culture of corruption, bribes and favours, stretching from the regime to society. The conclusion summarizes the main argument of the chapter and its contribution to the study. By navigating all these themes, the chapter tries to point out how people's quotidian activities and mundane actions constantly and ambiguously shifted between (re)producing and resisting power. The following is a detailed discussion of the subthemes that emerged.

6.1 The Cult of Personality

Since al-Fatḥ's successful overthrow of King Idris (section 4.2), the regime relied on diverse means of communication, the nature of which changed and developed over time, in order to spread its revolutionary ideology among the population. While radio messages and newspapers always occupied a central role, the propaganda machine became more elaborate after the launch of the 'Cultural Revolution' in 1973 and, in particular, the establishment of the 'Republic of the Masses' in 1977. The creation of al-Jamāhīrīyah marked a turning point because it triggered the transformation of the political and social structure of Libyan society according to the

philosophical ideas of Qadhdhafi's 'The Green Book.'[1] The regime not only launched economic and social policies that followed these philosophical principles, but also began spreading its 'revolutionary' values via television programs, songs, educational curricula and national holidays. While all those measures were taken to celebrate al-Fatḥ and its revolutionary causes, they most importantly revered the man who had led the revolution and penned its philosophical underpinnings. In other words, they laid the foundation of and contributed to, the functioning of the cult of personality of the Libyan leader, Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi. His portraits, speeches and quotes appeared on billboards, offices' walls, television programs,[2] as well as banknotes, stamps, t-shirts and watches.[3] Like 'God,' the interviewees pointed out that ninety-nine names existed to describe the Libyan leader, ranging from 'leader,' 'brother' and 'teacher' to 'engineer,'[4] 'warrior,' and so on.[5] This section discusses how the interviewees experienced and perceived the cult of Qadhdhafi.

6.1.1 An 'Exceptional Father'

The first aspect that emerges from the findings is how the interviewees referred to Qadhdhafi as an exceptional, ethereal and magical figure, possessing special and unique qualities. They demonstrate that Qadhdhafi was perceived as an intangible and 'more than a man' leader, whose traits astonished and fascinated people.[6] For instance, some interviewees convey the magical qualities of Qadhdhafi narrating their eagerness to 'see him.' The sensorial experience of 'seeing him' allowed associating a material body to a man whose nature was volatile – almost metaphysical, yet pervasive in the everyday life during al-Jamāhīrīyah.

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[1] Muammar Al Gathafi (2005) *The Green Book* (Reading: Ithaca Press).

[2] Varzi makes a similar argument on the case of post-Revolution Iran, see Roxanne Varzi (2006) *Warring Souls: Youth, Media and Martyrdom in Post-Revolution Iran* (Durham: Duke University Press).

[3] Valerie Stocker reconstructs carefully the regime's numerous rituals and efforts to occupy and control the symbolic space in Libya. See Valerie Stocker (2012) *Les enfants de la jamahiriyya: la jeunesse libyenne sous kadhafi – comportements sociaux, attitudes politiques et perceptions du discours official* [The children of al-jamāhīrīyah: libyan youth under qadhdhafi - social behaviours, political attitudes and perceptions of the official discourse] (Brussels: Éditions Universitaires Européennes), p. 96-136.

[4] Similarly, Lisa Weeden points out that the cult of Hafiz al-Asad also appeared elastic and thus allowing "incompatible claims to exist simultaneously. Asad can be both the 'knight of war' and the 'man of peace.' He can be the country's 'premier' pharmacist, teacher, doctor, and lawyer within a single election campaign." See Lisa Wedeen (1999) *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), pp. 39-40.

[5] The interviewees mentioned all those words used to address Qadhdhafi. See also Stocker, *Les enfants de la jamahiriyya,* pp. 131-133.

[6] Similarly, Farhad Khosrokhavar describes the role of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution in 1979: "The Guide is between human and super-human, between real and metaphysical; he is more than a man." See Khosrokhavar (1993) *L'utopie sacrifiée: sociologie de la révolution iranienne* [The sacrificed utopia: sociology of the iranian revolution] (Paris : Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques), p. 206 (my translation).

Every year on the first day of September, the regime celebrated the anniversary of al-Fatḥ Revolution; people gathered in the major squares of their cities, Qadhdhafi delivered a nationwide, hours-long televised speech and numerous other 'revolutionary' activities took place. Farag narrates how 'in one of these days in September 2010' the news spread that Qadhdhafi and his convoy was passing through Misrata via Tripoli Street. As soon as he and his friends heard such a news, they planned to attend the event because they 'wanted to see Qadhdhafi from a close distance.' As Farag recounts, 'the security level was higher than ever,' the extraordinary presence of police officers obstructed their view and nobody was allowed to leave the sidewalk:

> The convoy of cars arrived and they were all similar, all Toyota Land Cruisers - the big ones. In this way, we could not identify where he was…they did not want you to know […] we only wanted to see if Qadhdhafi was passing. […] one of my friends shouted 'I saw Qadhdhafi! I saw him!' We also started to shout 'Oh really, are you sure?' He was the only lucky one to see him and I remembered it was a silly thing at that time but, as students, we really planned to see him alive, close[7]

Such 'revolutionary' ceremonies were attempts to make visible the regime's domination ('higher level of security') and unity ('big cars, many people').[8] While al-Jamāhīrīyah organized spectacular events to celebrate and spread the cult of Qadhdhafi, the findings also show that people (re)produced the banality and mundanity of its magnitude.[9] Farag's narrative captures a quotidian experience of the magical aura surrounding Qadhdhafi, and reveals what role emotions play in mediating the subjective and social experience.[10] Their economy and circulation produces boundaries, surfaces of bodies and worlds, thus structures of power. As Sara Ahmed writes, "emotions may involve 'being moved' for some precisely by fixing others as 'having' certain characteristics."[11] Sentences like 'we wanted to see him close,' 'he was the lucky one to see him,' show how Farag's wonder and awe circulated and (re)enforced an existing cult of personality in al-Jamāhīrīyah. Such emotions 'moved' the interviewee because he imagined the leader as a man possessing special characteristics, but Qadhdhafi could not be

[7] Author Interview, Fareg, 27 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[8] Lisa Wedeen (2008) *Peripheral Visions – Publics, Power, and Performance in Yemen* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), p. 100.
[9] See also how Yael Navaro-Yashin makes a similar argument in the case of Turkey, see Navaro-Yashin (2002) *Faces of the State – Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 129.
[10] Sara Ahmed (2004) *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press), pp. 10-11.
[11] Ibid, p. 71.

special or exceptional without people acting and thinking in these terms. The narrative of Khaled also draws on a similar story. In 2005, when Qadhdhafi was invited to give a speech to the University of Tripoli, Khaled admits:

> It didn't matter if he was a good or bad leader. Qadhdhafi was a leader, he was everywhere, in streets, international news, dinars, books […] I had a chance to see him alive, and so I went to sit in the hall. Everybody wanted to see him from a close distance […][12]

Khaled expresses this desire to 'see him from a close distance,' demonstrating how people (re)produced the cult of personality through mundane conducts that reinforced its 'exceptional' qualities. In retrospect, he interprets the significance of this episode as:

> Qadhdhafi was the man, he was magic…I mean this was how we thought about him. At that time, we did not feel that it was a silly thing to go and see Qadhdhafi alive. It was very cool to see him.[13]

Other interviewees also explained what was often interpreted as an 'extravagant' behaviour of Qadhdhafi, which originated from his careful and extraordinary political acumen:

> Once I heard that Qadhdhafi delayed the landing of the Jordanian King's airplane, who was on an official visit to Libya, because he was punishing the king for having signed an agreement with Israel.[14]

On another occasion, Qadhdhafi was said to have been tricking and disrespecting the English Prime Minister, Tony Blair, during the whole length of their meeting:

> I heard that Qadhdhafi sat with the naked plan of his foot facing Blair. This is a sign of disrespect in Libyan culture, but Tony Blair could not understand it. Qadhdhafi was very smart.[15]

These narratives express admiration for Qadhdhafi's persona and his abilities to mock and disrespect any international leader, standing up to them. Moreover, the expressions 'I heard that'

[12] Author Interview, Khaled, 35 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[13] Ibid.
[14] Author Interview, Ahmed, 32 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[15] Author Interview, Abdullah, 42 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.

demonstrate the importance that rumours played during al-Jamāhīrīyah. When people feel that their lives are under constant surveillance, as shown in the previous chapter, gossip and rumors express the anxiety that flows from the scarcity or uncertainty of information, yet consolidate a real or imagined truth about an event. These presented rumors, in fact, praise and exalt[16] the cult of Qadhdhafi in a midst of doubt and awareness.

Another interviewee, Ahmed, describes Qadhdhafi's unique historical knowledge and political acumen as a leader,[17] discussing how 'the West' failed to understand the historical significance of Qadhdhafi's actions during his visit in Italy. In 2008, the government[18] of the Italian Republic apologized to the Libyan people for the atrocities committed during its colonial rule, accepting Qadhdhafi's demands to compensate Libya. After forty-years in power, in 2009 the Libyan leader visited Italy for the first time and met with then Italian Prime Minister, Silvio Berlusconi, in order to sign the 'Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation Agreement'[19] as a form of historical reconciliation between the two countries. Ahmed explains that, while Qadhdhafi landed in Rome dressed in a military uniform and later requested to meet 200 Italian women, the media interpreted his actions as an extravagant attempt to lecture and convert those women to Islam.[20] However, Ahmed indicates that Qadhdhafi simply re-enacted Italian colonial history upside-down. When Benito Mussolini arrived in Libya, presenting himself as the 'protector of Islam',[21] he travelled from Tobruk to Benghazi on a convertible car, requested to be welcomed by 200 Libyan women, who all came from Derna, and delivered a speech in the

[16] For rumour as reproducing violence and dominant hierarchies, See Veena Das (2006) *Life and Words* (New York: Columbia University Press), pp. 108-134; and Niko Besnier (2009) *Gossip and the Everyday Production of Politics* (Honolulu: Hawai'i University Press), pp. 17-19.
[17] Author Field Notes Ahmed, 28 years old, Italy, August 2015.
[18] Nick Pisa (2008) 'Silvio Berlusconi apologizes to Libya for colonial rule,' In: *The Telegraph*, available online at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/italy/2658703/Silvio-Berlusconi-apologises-to-Libya-for-colonial-rule.html (access date: 14 January 2016).
[19] For an historical overview of the agreement, see Mustafa Abdallah Kashiem (2010) 'The Treaty of Friendship, Partnership and Cooperation between Libya and Italy: From an Awkward Past to a Promising Equal Partnership' In: *Californian Italian Studies* 1:1, pp. 1-15.
[20] See for instance, John Hooper (2009) 'Gaddafi hires 200 young Italian women – to convert them to Islam,' In: *The Guardian*, available online at https://www.theguardian.com/world/2009/nov/16/gaddafi-women-islam-rome (access date: 10 January 2017); Tom Kington (2009) 'Muammar Gaddafi's 'cultural' tours to Libya for Italian models revealed in diary,' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/nov/28/muammar-gaddafi-italian-women-converts (access date: 10 January 2017); Al-Arabiya (2009) 'Gaddafi spends two hours with 200 Italian ladies,' available online at: http://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2009/11/16/91470.html (access date: 15 September 2016).
[21] For a scholarly and historical detailed discussion of Mussolini's visit to Libya, see Charles Burdett (2010) 'Mussolini's Journey to Libya (1937) 'Ritual, Power and Transculturation' In: Jacqueline Andall & Derek Duncan (eds.) *National Belongings: Hybridity in Italian Colonial and Postcolonial Cultures* (Bern: Peter Lang), pp. 151-169.

main square of Benghazi.[22] Ahmed elucidates that Qadhdhafi's arrival in Italy only replicated Mussolini's grand arrival in Libya. Firstly, he landed in Rome in a military uniform with a photo of Omar al-Mukhtar, the indigenous leader of the Libyan resistance against Italian colonization, later hanged by General Italo Balbo in 1923. Secondly, he delivered a speech from a balcony in Piazza del Popolo in Rome, which Mussolini used to address the Italian people. Finally, he travelled in a convertible car together with Silvio Berlusconi, and asked to meet 200 Italian women. For these reasons, Ahmed concludes:

> Do you understand? Qadhdhafi knew our history, he was a very smart, exceptional Leader.[23]

The narrative shows how the interviewee revered Qadhdhafi's political acumen, presenting him as a 'very smart, exceptional' man, and challenged those Western media stereotypes used to label Qadhdhafi as 'mad or extravagant.' Both discourses, however, participate in the (re)production of the cult of Qadhdhafi and his unique persona, either as mad or exceptional.

The 'exceptional' grandeur of Qadhdhafi also entailed a predisposition to 'immortality.' For instance, one story narrates that Qadhdhafi survived an attempt to his life during a planned visit to his father's tomb. At the last minute, Qadhdhafi cancelled the visit 'as if he knew that somebody planted a bomb there.' [24] Another interviewee, Latif, offers one of the most emblematic narrative that captures the ethereal, all-knowing and God-like aspects of Qadhdhafi's cult of personality. One day, the cousin of Latif, who worked as a security guard for the regime, joined a convoy of twelve cars directed to Dernah to fight the Islamist groups. Latif narrates that, when the convoy reached the bridge of Wādī al-Kūf, Qadhdhafi ordered the convoy to stop because he wanted to observe Dernah through a pair of googles. While everybody stayed in, only Qadhdhafi and Latif's cousin stepped out of the cars:

> Now think about what kind of personality Qadhdhafi had! As they were out, my cousin started thinking to himself: 'The only thing I did in my life has been working for this man, and he messed up so much in the world, what if I push him down now.'[25]

[22] John L. Wright (2005) 'Mussolini and the Sword of Islam' In: Ruth Ben-Ghiat & Mia Fuller (eds.) *Italian Colonialism* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan), pp. 121-130.
[23] Author Field Notes Ahmed, 28 years old, Italy, August 2015.
[24] Author Field Notes, Zahy, 31 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.
[25] Author Interview, Latif, 40 years old, Italy, August 2015.

As soon as the cousin started having these 'dangerous thoughts':

> Qadhdhafi turned around, looked deeply into his eyes, and said: 'What are you doing here?' My cousin replied: 'I am with you; in case you need something.' But Qadhdhafi told him to sit in the last car of the convoy and drive back to his house. He told him to leave […] Qadhdhafi was not normal, he was very charismatic…but also intelligent, superior in a way, he could read into your eyes.[26]

This narrative not only shows how the magnitude of his charisma expanded, but also relates to those aspects of surveillance of the self as discussed in the previous chapter. The 'immortal' character of Qadhdhafi includes a 'superior' capacity to penetrate and understand the deepest and obscure thoughts of people ('he could read into your eyes'), anticipating any threats to his life. A popular joke reinforces this aspect, trivializing any attempt to kill or plot against him:

> Qadhdhafi, Jallūd and Yūnis are standing on the top of al-Fatḥ Tower in Tripoli. While Qadhdhafi stands in front of them looking at the city, Yūnis and Jallūd begin arguing whether and who should push him down. 'You do it!' 'No, c'mon! You do it!' At the end, Jallūd decides to pushes him down…but Qadhdhafi flies.[27]

It does not matter how hard his closest affiliates ('Abd al-Salām Jallūd and Abū Bakr Yūnis) were trying to plot or kill Qadhdhafi: 'he flies,' thus survives. Depicted as a man who could survive numerous life-attempts, the findings demonstrate that Qadhdhafi abandoned the sphere of the terrestrial, human world in order to reach a metaphysical dimension.[28] However, there is a second aspect that emerges, which translated those ethereal qualities into a more concrete, tangible figure, whose legitimacy related to the gendered constructions of patriarchal family life: Qadhdhafi as the 'father.'[29]

Many popular songs praised Qadhdhafi as 'our father' (*abūnā*), 'my love' (*ḥabībī*) or 'the light in the midst of the darkness.'[30] The interviewees directed me to one song, in particular, that

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Author Interview, Mukthar, 28 years old, Durham, May 2015.
[28] See Michael Schatzberg's comparative analysis of African leaders' where he argues how their cult of personality interrelates with the capacity to muster or play with occult practices. See Michael G. Schatzberg (2001) *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press).
[29] Wedeen, *Ambiguities of Domination,* p. 51.
[30] Some popular songs praising Qadhdhafi are available online, see YouTube (2013) 'Awaḍ al-mālikī – anti 'uẓmá [Awad al-maliki – you are great], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DBpl8KutZlM (access date: 10 January 2016); YouTube (2013) ''Ihna qaṣarnā fī ḥaqikā sāmiḥnā khāṣṣ li-qanāt al-khaḍrā' [We have not

started circulating in 2011 whose title exemplified the paternal structural of the cult and its legitimacy: 'We are one family and he is our father.'[31] Although the lyrics of the song never mention who is the father, the overall message of this revolutionary tune is clear: Qadhdhafi is the father and the family is called to respect his role and authority. In 2011, during an interview where Qadhdhafi was asked to comment on the ongoing protests, he replied:

> Against me for what? I am not the president. They love me, all my people is with me. They love me all! They will die to protect me, my people.[32]

Qadhdhafi's answer does not show how 'unfit and disconnected from reality he is,'[33] as the then US Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, affirmed. Rather it reveals how such a cult of personality tied ruler and ruled in a relationship of love and dependency that resembles a father-family connection.[34] The statement 'they love me all' only demonstrates how the figure of the father was a well-established feature of the cult of personality, since economic and emotional dependency connected the ruled to the rulers, the father to his family and his children.

The interviewees depicted Qadhdhafi as a father-figure who, for instance, provided for his people:

> I am proud and honored to have lived twenty-three years of my life under Qadhdhafi. I am proud to have had him as a father.[35]

> He took care of us like a father![36]

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given you what you deserve, forgive us. exclusive to al-khadra channel], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7GqyCRhSg7E (access date: 10 January 2016).

[31] See YouTube (2012) 'Ihna 'Īlah wa-al-qā'id nūnā' [We are one family and the leader is our father], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-sfXeriBuQ&list=RDpNE7vliLEhc&index=6 (access date: 10 January 2016).

[32] YouTube (2011) 'Full Colonel Gaddafi interview 02 March 2011' [9:28-9:40] available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tEq-n6ciuxc (access date: 02 September 2016).

[33] See al-Arabiya (2011) '"All my people love me," says "delusional" Gaddafi,' available online at: https://www.alarabiya.net/articles/2011/03/01/139684.html (access date: 01 November 2017); see also an article from The Telegraph, where Qadhdhafi' words are described as part of 'a typical flourish of the dictator's bizarre, saber-rattling and increasingly self-delusional rhetoric.' See John Paul Ford-Rojas (2011) 'Muammar Gaddafi in his own words,' In: *The Telegraph*, available online at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/libya/8838644/Muammar-Gaddafi-in-his-own-words.html (access date: 01 November 2017).

[34] In making bodies social, gender participates in the construction of power norms. The inbuilt inequalities of a patriarchal structure tend to favour men. See Katherine Verdery (1996) *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 63.

[35] Athor Field Notes, Marwan, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.

[36] Author Interview, Mohammed, 28 years old, Manchester, September 2015.

Or they described him as the 'father' who betrayed his family:

> Think as if your father has money and he is not giving it to you and your brothers…but to someone else.[37]

> It's like knowing that your father has so much money but he is spending this money outside of the house, not for his family.[38]

While interpretations varied on how 'the father' provided for the family and offered protection (those findings are discussed in Chapter 7 Section 3), the interviewees' adoption of the 'metaphor of the father' resonates with the political discourse that the regime propagated long time before the 2011 events. The recurrence of the metaphor shows that Qadhdhafi's cult of power cohered with a pattern of social relations that privileged paternal authority. It reveals what type of relationship passed between ruler and subjects,[39] where the latter are presumed to be "grateful recipients – like small children in a family – of benefits their rulers decided upon for them."[40] Some interviewees also stressed how Qadhdhafi was addressed with the word *sidi sabīb* (the knight), a Libyan expression used to convey great reverence and respect toward somebody. As they explained, although a father can be addressed with the word 'sidi' (my master), *sidi sabīb* was only reserved for Qadhdhafi.[41]

Another important aspect that contributed to the glorification of Qadhdhafi's persona was his renunciation of any official position within al-Jamāhīrīyah. Since 1978 Qadhdhafi retired formally from any institutional role,[42] conferring upon himself only the title of 'Brotherly Leader and Guide to the First of September Great Revolution of the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab al-Jamāhīrīyah.' His philosophical idea aimed at the realization of the 'government of the masses' through the elimination of any form of institutional intermediary – i.e. political parties, parliaments, leaders or tribes -, which were instead considered as an impediment to democracy.[43] However, when the masses struggled to embrace the righteous 'revolutionary' path, the 'father' or other 'revolutionary' organs intervened. The collected

[37] Author Interview, Mustapha, 42 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
[38] Author Interview, Yassen, 30 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[39] Verdery, *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?*, p. 63.
[40] Ibid.
[41] Author Interview, Nuri, 46 years old, Hull, March 2015; Author Interview, Younis, 34 years old, Italy, August 2015; Author Field Notes, Marwan, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[42] Dirk Vandewalle (2006) *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 28.
[43] Al Gathafi, *The Green Book*, p. 63.

narratives evidence that interviewees called into question such a role and often outlined its inherent contradictions and abuses of power.

6.1.2 A 'Fooling Villain'

For instance, Saad narrates that, while the Libyan regime was forcibly sending people to fight in Chad in the 1980s, killing or jailing those who refused to do so, Qadhdhafi acted as if he did not know what was happening:

> He was the 'Leader of the Revolution' and he didn't know anything about this. In fact, after three years of war, one day he came on television and said 'I heard that you have been fighting in Chad. Can you tell me why?' Can you imagine? He asked 'Can you tell me why?'[44]

Saad thinks that Qadhdhafi is fooling with his people. While the regime decided to invade Chad from more than 10 years, forcibly recruiting people as fighters, the Libyan leader appeared on television as naïve and unaware of such dynamics.

Ibrahim describes two similar episodes, which other interviewees also mentioned several times. In 1995, being under international sanctions, al-Jamāhīrīyah started importing Hyundai cars with 'very bright colours' - i.e. orange, green, and yellow - and a 'very funny shape.' Ibrahim clarifies that, although the regime subsidised the purchase of these cars, popular discontent grew around their colour and brand to such an extent that people referred to them as 'a bag of candies' [skhara min alwa]. In that year, during one of his speeches, Qadhdhafi addressed the population saying:

> I was in conflict with one of the People's Committee because they delivered me a car whose colour I disliked. So, I started looking for a person who wanted to swap his car with mine.[45]

During the same speech, Qadhdhafi also said:

[44] Author Interivew, Saad, 43 years old, Hull, September 2015.
[45] Author Interview, Ibrahim, 36 years old, Hull, March 2015.

> ‘Can you imagine that this year I didn’t have enough money to buy a goat or a lamb to slaughter for Eid al-Adha? I needed to go and borrow money from my friend, ‘Abd al-Salām Jallūd.’[46]

As much as it is a habit to celebrate Eid al-Adha, an annual Muslim festivity, with the slaughter of a goat or lamb, so it is a religious duty to help a fellow believer in need, which explains why Qadhdhafi turned toward his friend, Jallūd, for help. After presenting those episodes, Ibrahim reflects on ‘why did Qadhdhafi say those things?’ and imagines two different possibilities:

> Either he wanted to say ‘I am a poor person, I am like you and I go ask my fellow citizens, I don’t do corruption’ or, if I try to think beyond what is saying, he [Qadhdhafi] is just trying to fool the people and he did not pay attention to them. He treated them like sheep, like nothing. Maybe that was the reality.[47]

Ibrahim also asserts that Qadhdhafi was ‘trying to fool’ the people, suggesting that the Libyan leader treated them without ‘paying attention.’ Commenting on the same episode, Shaykh Hussein says:

> He [Qadhdhafi] has no money (to buy a goat), poor man [laughing]… he has trillions, trillions and trillions. Can you imagine?[48]

The interviewee acknowledges the contradictions of the Leader, conveying a sense of cheating and disrespect, which is exemplified in other expressions used by the interviewees to compare the treatment of Libyans to animals:

> He treated us like sheep.[49]

> He treated Libya as his farm and the Libyans like animals.[50]

Consequently, the exceptional stature of the Leader was not only met with disappointment and criticism, but satire and humour. Many interviewees, in fact, drew on popular, quotidian jokes in order to illustrate how they perceived the grandeur and charisma of Qadhdhafi:

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[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Author Interview, Shaykh Hussein, 50 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[49] Author Interview, Ahmed, 33 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[50] Author Interview, Mahmoud, 31 years old, Hull, September 2015.

> Qadhdhafi and *Shayṭān* (Satan) are sitting together. *Shayṭān* proposes to Qadhdhafi to organize something malicious against the people. Thrilled by such idea, Qadhdhafi whispers something into *Shayṭān*'s ear, who replies, 'That's too much! You are really evil!'[51]

The 'benevolent and protecting' father is able to shock the most merciless creature, the representation of evil par excellence, Satan (*Shayṭān*). The joke has a religious weight because, as the Libyan leader surpass Satan, he embodies the latter's traits, becoming a force of evil who distracts man from goodness while showing arrogance toward God.[52] Also, it echoes those Islamic-derived criticisms of Qadhdhafi. For example, some interviewees pointed out that Qadhdhafi was not 'a real Muslim'[53] because he prohibited people from visiting *al-Ka'bah* in Mecca for political reasons[54] - as a form of retaliation against Saudi Arabia –, or devalued the relevance of the *Sunnah*[55] as a source of religious knowledge.[56]

Other jokes also mock the support Qadhdhafi enjoyed at the popular level, unveiling its fake and forced character:

> Gamal Abdel Nasser, Saddam Hussein and Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi go out hunting, and all of them are accompanied by their revolutionary companions. As the hunting starts, the first one to shoot is Nasser. He takes his rifle, aims a bird and fires. Two birds go down. Everybody starts cheering Nasser 'He is the Greatest! He is the Greatest! He killed them all!' Then, it's the turn of Saddam Hussein, who takes his rifle, aims the target and fires. One bird is wounded. All his supporters start cheering 'He wound a bird, the bird will die. He is the Greatest!' At last, Qadhdhafi takes his rifle, aims the birds and fires. His shoot misses them all. At first everybody remains silent, then all his supporters start cheering 'Look, the birds are flying and dying, flying and dying!'[57]

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[51] Author Interview, Hamid, 32 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[52] See also the Oxford Islamic Studies Encyclopaedia Online, available online at: http://www.oxfordislamicstudies.com/article/opr/t125/e2108 (access date 17 April 2017).
[53] Author Interview, Salah, 27 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[54] Author Interview, Mukthar, 37 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[55] The Sunnah is the amount of verbally transmitted record of the teachings, deeds and sayings of the Islamic prophet Muhammad, which – together with the Qur'an – constitute the most important source for Islamic theology and law.
[56] Author Interview, Ismail, 32 years old, Nottingham, May 2015; and Author Interview, Shaykh Murad, 50 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[57] Author Interview, Khaled, 35 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.

In a slightly different version of this joke, the three rulers ask their supporters to sacrifice themselves by jumping from a bridge. While the political support for Nasser is overwhelming, and partial for Saddam, only one man jumps over the bridge for the Libyan leader. Qadhdhafi immediately welcomes the man's gesture and promises to reward any of his wishes, the man looks at him and replies:

Bring me the one who pushed me.[58]

Both jokes reveal the fake support Qadhdhafi enjoyed as a ruler. During the hunting session, he misses completely the target but his supporters keep cheering him on the basis of a complete lie: the bird is 'flying and dying.' Consequently, this joke evidences how al-Jamāhīrīyah forced people to live in what Achille Mbembe calls regimes of unreality (*regime du simulacre*), where dissimulation appears to be the main modality of interaction between the state and society.[59] The second joke stresses instead how coercion lied at the basis of people's support for Qadhdhafi, and – together with the following one - captures more clearly the role surveillance played:

> One day Qadhdhafi decides he wants to go to the cinema. Since he does not want people to recognize him, he dresses up like a Bedouin and goes to the cinema. During the screening, the movie shows Qadhdhafi. Everybody in the cinema immediately stands up and starts cheering for him, while Qadhdhafi remains seated. Suddenly someone from the back row slaps his head and says, 'Hey, stand up and start cheering! Otherwise they will come and take you!'[60]

These jokes verbalize unspoken, unarticulated, and thus repressed elements of quotidian life, providing a safety valve, a space for laughter that ridicules the power holders without allowing them to access such a space. While the previous chapter showed how power functioned by merging public and private spheres via fear and surveillance (see Chapter 5 Section 1), these jokes reveal how people were able to navigate and bargain with those different spheres of everyday lives. They capture, as Mbembe writes, the postcolonial subject as an *homo ludens*,[61] capable to wear different masks, thus negotiating its identity with dominant norms and discourses. At the same time, these forms of transgression and hostility towards al-Jamāhīrīyah

[58] Author Interview, Ali, 35 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.
[59] Achille Mbembe (2001) *On the Postcolony* (Berkley: University of California Press), p. 129.
[60] Author Interview, Hamid, 34 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[61] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, p. 104.

are an everyday expression of a modality of power through which the regime functioned: dissimulation.[62] They constitute a form of quotidian 'cynicism'[63] because, while people are very well aware of the difference between 'mask' and 'reality,' they keep wearing the mask. Critical and mocking narratives perform the necessary work for subjects to preserve their pretence – thus survival - in the official sphere.[64]

Another important example of 'everyday cynicism' emerges from a joke on Qadhdhafi and his wife, Safia. The joke recounts how for three consecutive nights, when Safia stepped out of the house to throw the garbage, a man sitting on a nearby fence called her up and asked a strange question:

'Safia! Safia! Do you have a pussy?'

Feeling crossed, Safia decides to approach her husband, Mu'ammar, to recount the episode and find out how to deal with such an insolent man. Mu'ammar suggests to provide an affirmative response, should such a situation present itself again. The following night Safia goes out to throw the garbage and, as she starts walking back in the house, the man raises exactly the same question. Knowing what to do, Safia replies 'Yes, I do!' and the man promptly adds:

> Well, tell your husband to busy himself with it because it is forty years that he has been screwing us in the ass![65]

The joke is an expression of the 'aesthetics of vulgarity,'[66] which consists of mocking power and political authority through metaphors referring to more common and crass bodily functions of human beings. The joke hints to Qadhdhafi's perverted pleasures, who appears to enjoy 'screwing in the ass' the Libyan populace rather than having sex with his wife. It is interesting to see how, on the one hand, the joke mocks Qadhdhafi's power by casting doubt on his masculinity. On the other hand, however, the joke posits the Libyan nation as that which is being sodomized, thus Qadhdhafi occupies a powerful and active role vis-à-vis the powerlessness of Libyans. The Libyan leader's 'perversion' hints to a lack of masculinity, thus effeminacy, which ultimately mocks his power. However, the joke also posits the Libyan

[62] Slavoj Žižek (1987) *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso).
[63] Peter Sloterdijk defines jokes a form of 'cynical reason' that fail to function as a form of critique of ideology. See Peter Sloterdijk (1987) *Critique of Cynical Reason* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
[64] Alexei Yurchak (1997) 'The Cynical Reason of Late Socialism: Power, Pretense, and the *Anekdot*' In: *Public Culture* 9, pp. 161-188.
[65] Fieldwork Notes, Italy, August 2015.
[66] See Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, pp. 102-141 and Mikhail Bakhtin (1968) *Rabelais and His World* (Cambridge: MIT Press).

populace at the receiving end of the sexual act of sodomy ('screwing us in the ass'). According to the prevailing sexual narrative that accords a domineering role to the penetrator,[67] Qadhdhafi remains in a masculine position, thus in power. For these reasons, it is possible to comprehend how the joke (re)produces a viewpoint that privileges masculine authority, while it tries to undermine it.[68] Such a vision of power via sexuality (re)emerged upside-down in another fundamental historical moment: that is, Qadhdhafi's capture in October 2011 (see Chapter 4 Section 4). Once captured, the rebels literally sodomized him with a bayonet as a means of degradation and humiliation.[69] The joke not only mocks the authority of the leader, but also reveals the centrality of a conception of power based on patriarchal authority.

While the interviewees narrate how dissimulation arose from the difficulties people faced to confront openly the regime, they also describe how this attitude offered possibilities to manoeuvre the codes and rituals of the cult of personality through their careful mustering. For instance, in 2000, Ali, together with other students, started organizing 'walks,' meaning protests, against the university's failure to pay their scholarships on time. The head manager of the university not only had a tendency to withhold those payments for several months, but he also kept one or two payment-rates for himself. Considering the high number of students, as Ali claims, he was able to accumulate millions. A 'walk,' therefore, was a form of protest consisting of a group of students blocking the main road of the university, holding a picture of Qadhdhafi and shouting:

> 'We are here by the name of Qadhdhafi and you cannot tell us what to do, otherwise you are against Qadhdhafi.'[70]

As Ali continues, the use of Qadhdhafi's picture was a 'red line' for everybody, from the police to the secret services (see Chapter 5 Section 3):

> Qadhdhafi's picture saved us. I was saved by Qadhdhafi [laughing]. Qadhdhafi loved people holding his pictures. Nobody could touch us then, neither the police

[67] Jonathan Goldberg, *Sodometries: Renaissance Texts Modern Sexualities* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010) p. 202.
[68] See Villy Tsakona and Diana Elena Popa (2011) 'Humour in politics and the politics of humour' In: Villy Tsakona and Diana Elena Popa (eds.) *Studies in Political Humour* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V.), p. 2.
[69] See Martin Chulov (2012) 'Gaddafi's last moments: 'I saw the hand holding the gun and I saw it fire', In: *The* Guardian, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2012/oct/20/muammar-gaddafi-killing-witnesses (access date: 12 April 2017). A video also exists showing such an image, see YouTube (2011) 'Gaddafi libyan king sodomized with stick,' available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q1z_j0XeG0o (access date: 12 April 2017)
[70] Author Interview, Ali, 34 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.

> nor the intelligence. It was like a red line, and they stopped harassing us because the 'Leader of the Revolution' was one of us [laughing].[71]

The students' use of the picture of Qadhdhafi guaranteed legitimacy and protection to their protests, allowing them to challenge the power holders without being held accountable. The story of Ali involves an ability to muster the performance of what James C. Scott calls 'the public transcript of power,' which subjects manipulated in order to survive. Similarly, Musa narrates that a couple of days before the 1st September anniversary, a man came into his shop in order to sell pictures of Qadhdhafi. Although a refusal to buy such a picture could be interpreted as a sign of opposition toward the regime, Musa replied:

> 'How do you dare to sell those pictures? The pictures of our 'Father' should be given for free to his people.' The man was shocked. He didn't say anything, he gave me a bad look – because I tricked him - and he left [big laugh].[72]

The man was trying to raise money playing on people's fears but Musa confronted him by stressing how daring he was to sell pictures of the 'father' to his family. Both of them appear to use the cult of personality for their own benefits, whether making or saving money. They accept and use the meanings of the cult when those allow them to either survive or protect their interests. These insights expose the political ambiguity of mundane actions in al-Jamāhīrīyah, since they (re)produced dominant hierarchies of power, while simultaneously acknowledging their coercive or contradictory character in private. The next section discusses how those dynamics also emerged when the interviewees discussed their everyday interactions with 'The Green Book.'

6.2 The Green Book

> I heard this story saying that he took a stone and wrote upon it one sentence from 'The Green Book.' Then, he threw the stone in the desert. I am not sure if this is

[71] Ibid.
[72] Author Interview, Musa, 35 years old, Hull, March 2015.

> true, but what it means is he wanted that somebody would discover his words on that rock in 2000 years. He wanted to make history.[73]

As mentioned previously, al-Jamāhīrīyah created an elaborate propaganda machine that inundated the everyday life of people and whose 'revolutionary' aspects connected and intertwined. The narrative of Ashraf provides an everyday rumour on the determination of the Libyan leader to carve his place in history by sculpting one of his philosophical gems on a rock to be discovered by posterity. Most importantly, it shows the continuity, as well as the entanglement, between Qadhdhafi's cult of personality and 'The Green Book.'[74] The launch of al-Jamāhīrīyah, in fact, triggered the transformation of the entire Libyan society in accordance with the philosophical directives outlined by Qadhdhdafi. For instance, Abdul Hakim summarizes succinctly how the theory of direct democracy re-shaped the decision-making process of the country:

> Each village in the country – and we have like 360 of them - contained a People's Committees (*al-lijān al-sha'bīyah*), which were like small parliaments. And every time they made a decision, the leader of the People's Committee passed it to the main parliament, The People's Conference (*al-mu'tamar al-sha'bī*), which took decisions based on all these others.[75]

The decisions made among the popular committees formed the basis for those collective resolutions formulated by the People's Conference at the national level. In so doing, the system allowed everybody to participate to the decision-making process of the country, establishing the people's authority (*al-sulṭah al-sha'bīyah*). In order to promote such a vision, the regime also took innovative measures, such as relying on international celebrities to publicize Qadhdhafi's political treaty. For instance, Mohammed remembers his shock at seeing Bebeto, a well-known Brazilian footballer, being pictured with a copy of 'The Green Book'[76] in the sport magazine 'The Echo' [*al-sādah*]. Also, the regime established a centre for the study of

[73] Author Interview, Marwan, 45 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[74] For an understanding of al-Jamāhīrīyah structure and the division into Popular Committees, see Davis, *Tribe and Revolution in Libya*; David Blundy and Andrew Lycett (1987) *Qaddafi and the Libyan Revolution* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company), pp. 101-113. For a more theoretical understanding of the People's Authority, see Hameed Al- Saadi (1987) *Sovereignty between Delegation of Authority and the Exercise of Popular Power* (Tripoli: World Center for the Studies and Researches of the Green Book).
[75] Author Interview, Abdul Hakim, 34 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[76] Author Interview, Mohammed, 28 years old, Manchester, September 2015.

the Green Book,[77] where numerous symposia were organized to discuss its philosophical relevance, and students, in particular, interacted with its theoretical underpinnings through specific modules assigned in primary school - 'The Society of al-Jamāhīrīyah' (*al-mujtama' al-jamāhīrī*) - or secondary school and university – namely, 'al-Jamāhīrīyah Thought' (*al-fikr al-jamāhīrī*).

When the interviewees describe what the content of these modules entailed, the entanglement between the cult of personality and 'The Green Book' is, once again, revealed:

> It was all about a single person [Qadhdhafi], and the content repeats itself every year. It has some chapter about Qadhdhafi. I remember a chapter on al-Fatḥ Revolution, which talks about the journey of Qadhdhafi from Benghazi to Tripoli in an old Volkswagen car.[78]

From theory to practice, as Ali recounts, students were also encouraged to replicate the 'Popular Committees' structure within their schools and classes, creating smaller versions of al-Jamāhīrīyah:

> I remember that, when I was in primary school, elections were organized to vote for a leader inside the class, who would then become the class representative in the People's Political Conference (*al-mu'tamarāt al-sha'bī al-siasī*) at the school level, and we used to call him - for example - Omar Mukhtar. Can you imagine that? I was just 9 years-old.[79]

'The Green Book' had a major impact over Libyan society, since the regime tried to instil its directives among people from a very young age. However, the collected narratives show the existence of an ambiguous and questioning attitude toward 'The Green Book's theoretical content and its practical implementation among the interviewees.

[77] Daniel Howden (2011) 'Gaddafi's Green Book study Centre flattened' In: *The Independent*, available online at: http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/africa/gaddafis-green-book-study-centre-flattened-2282146.html (Access date: 07 November 2017).
[78] Author Interview, Hassan, 29 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[79] Author Interview, Ali, 34 years old, Durham, September 2014.

The findings not only stress the predominant role Qadhdhafi's ideas and achievements had in those modules, but also indicate how the interviewees perceived these courses as a means to control and instil fear among people. Salim, for instance, says:

> All these modules were talking about Qadhdhafi's achievements. […] What Qadhdhafi did, changed, and so on. It was like one lecture per week – one or one and a half hour - and I think the purpose for teaching this module was 'Be careful, we are in front of you, we are here.'[80]

What Salim describes as 'the purpose for teaching this module' is a significant point. It shows how some interviewees interpret the module on 'The Green Book' as a mechanism of control and surveillance over their lives. Consequently, when fear becomes the main element to drive people's action, such as studying 'The Green Book,' dissimulation can become the main modality of interaction vis-à-vis the regime's ideological rituals, since it allows to survive and get on with life. And, in fact, many interviewees insistently repeated that:

> No I didn't believe in it, and not even Qadhdhafi himself believed in it […] As a student, you need to learn some statements by heart. You need to show yourself as someone who praises Qadhdhafi.[81]

> We are just repeating it. Every morning, we repeat some things, such as 'We are all for you, Qadhdhafi…and blablabla.' Until we come to a stage where we can realize what is going on.[82]

Those narratives reveal the important role repeated dissimulation played in the (re)production of dominant norms, meanings and mechanisms in al-Jamāhīrīyah. Although the interviewees clarify that the question of belief was of secondary importance due the 'futurity of fear' (see Chapter 2 Section 4.2) the necessity of 'repeating' and 'showing yourself as' allowed dominant hierarchies of power to remain unchallenged. These dynamics become even clearer by looking at how the interviewees practiced and experience the final exam of such modules:

[80] Author Interview, Salim, 29 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[81] Author Interview, Hakim, 29 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[82] Author Interview, Omar, 32 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.

> What we used to do was to study the night before the exam, just to pass the exam. Even if I did not believe in these things that I had to write, I still needed to pass the exam, so I did it.[83]

> When we had to answer to certain questions for this course, we all knew we were lying but you have to answer the questions fully.[84]

While the narratives highlight a detached attitude toward the ideological content of the course ('we all knew we were lying,' 'I did not believe'), they also show that interviewees had to engage ('I had to write,' 'we had to answer') with those same 'revolutionary' mechanisms in order to get by ('I still needed to pass the exam'). The interviewees expose a cynical distance toward their everyday 'doings' of life that allows to survive, while simultaneously (re)producing power structures. Following the ideas of Slavoj Žižek, cynical distance is "just one way to blind ourselves to the structuring power of ideological fantasy: even if we do not take things seriously, even if we keep an ironical distance, *we are still doing them*."[85] It is always the 'doing' part of the equation that determines and ascribes meaning to the 'knowing' one. Also, Basher provides an example of how to answer to one of the final exam's questions:

> For example - to a question like: 'Who liberated us from slavery?' You cannot simply reply 'Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi.' You will say 'The leader of the revolution, the saviour of the country, the brother-leader, and so on.' We had to use a certain code and language. We were pretending that we believed in these ideas.[86]

The narrative indicates that quotidian practices of life contribute to the (re)production of power via the normalization of language and ideas. While people did not believe in these ideas, their acts normalized a code used to provide a certain vision of the world. The answers to the exam ('leader of the revolution, saviour of the country'), therefore, functioned as the word *zanādiqah*, which people required to use in order to address the so-called 'enemies of the revolution,' as explained in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5 Section 3). These processes show that, as the regime tried to govern and control people, so the latter contributed to the (re)production of the dominant codes and hierarchies even in their attempt to escape the grid of domination.

[83] Author Interview, Ismail, 32 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[84] Author Interview, Nabil, 35 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[85] Žižek, *Sublime Object of Ideology*, p. 32.
[86] Author Interview, Basher, 31 years old, Durham, September 2014.

While the narratives presented up to this point recounted how the interviewees 'as students' interacted with the Green Book, others described the perspective of the teachers. For instance, teachers allowed students to cheat during the exams of The Green Book-related modules:

> In The Green Book module, you could cheat at the exam. You could take your Green Book and copy what the questions asked. I did it in all years…primary, secondary…The teachers closed the door, and said 'This is rubbish, do whatever you want.'[87]

According to the interviewees, teachers appeared to be as cynical as the students and, as the following narrative of Mansour explain, fear also guided their actions. Being the Head of the Accountancy department, Mansour narrates that during the holy month of Ramadan he organized a meeting with faculty members in order to redesign the university curricula and include all the necessary courses that prepared the students to attend degrees in economics. Although the meeting was successful, it went on for hours because they were struggling to incorporate one particular topic, 'The thought of al-Jamāhīrīyah':

> The point is that everybody knew how useless such a subject for the students was. But you had to include it, otherwise you would have had problems.[88]

The hours-long struggle to fit the 'revolutionary' course in the curricula exemplifies the pervasiveness of both the ideological messages of the regime and the dissimulating attitude adopted by the interviewees in the everyday life during al-Jamāhīrīyah.

The importance of dissimulation lies in how it signalled a high level of political alienation,[89] distance and silent rejection of the regime's hegemony, which people were afraid to express publically. The interviewees studied 'The Green Book,' dissimulating loyalty to its ideals, in order to avoid being questioned or punished by the regime. At the same time, the findings demonstrate that the interviewees engaged with the structures and symbols of al-Jamāhīrīyah in order to get by. In other words, while dissimulation allowed the regime to (re)produce its power, those quotidian practices were the only available means for people to critique the regime

[87] Author Interview, Reem, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[88] Author Interview, Mansour, 42 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[89] Mabroka al-Werfalli, (2011) *Political Alienation in Libya: Assessing Citizens' Political Attitude and Behaviour* (Reading: Ithaca Press), pp. 73-120.

in a situation where open resistance was not possible, unless they were ready to violate openly its 'public transcripts.'[90]

The next section moves to examine the recurrence of those dynamics of power, focusing on how the interviewees perceived and experienced the organization of the Revolutionary Committees.

6.3 The Revolutionary Committees

Since the RC were firstly established in the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi in 1977,[91] they played an important role in the everyday political dynamics of al-Jamāhīrīyah. Created to represent the ideological vanguard of the masses, 'The Green Book' had not mentioned their creation and Qadhdhafi only envisioned a temporary role for them as 'the safety valve and sieve' of People's Power.[92] They, nonetheless, became a veritable 'State' within the 'State,' turning into an omnipotent militia. The RC carried out acts of unprecedented violence, "such as the burning of books in the universities, the hanging of Islamists, the physical elimination of opponents in the country and in exile,"[93] while claiming to represent the whole of society. They had the power to set up revolutionary courts, control schools, universities, factories, media and especially the army and the police. Relying on their power, they also accumulated wealth through diverse illicit practices – such as the confiscation of properties, misuse of public funds and money laundering – during the first 'revolutionary' decade.[94] Their creation marked "the separation of formal authority -- as embodied by the congress and committee system [theorized in the Green Book] -- and revolutionary authority."[95] While their first members belonged to the 'revolutionary' generation formed within the ideological camps,[96] who mostly came from

[90] James C. Scott (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (London: Yale University Press).
[91] Omar El Fathaly, Monte Palmer (1980) *Political Development and Social Change in Libya* (Toronto: Lexington Books), p. 202; Jonathan Bearman (1986) *Qadhafi's Libya* (London: Zed Books), pp. 187-199. For an overview on the emergence and creation of the Revolutionary Committees up to the early 1990s, as well as the gradual reduction of their power, see Mattes, 'The Rise and Fall of Revolutionary Committees,' pp. 89-112.
[92] Gideon Gera (1977-1978) 'Libya,' in: Colin Legum, Haim Shaked, Daniel Dishon, Jacqueline Dyck (eds.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey*, 2, p. 631.
[93] Moncef Ouannes (2009) *Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la libye contemporaine* [Military, élites and modernisation in contemporary libya] (Paris: L'Harmattan), p. 196.
[94] Ibid, p. 194.
[95] Mattes, 'The Rise and Fall of the Revolutionary Committees,' p. 94.
[96] Amal Obeidi (2001) *Political Culture in Libya* (Richmond: Curzon Press), p. 54.

disadvantaged classes,[97] their ranks changed and developed over time, with their power fading gradually from the early 2000s.

The interviewees elaborate on all these different aspects, starting from the more general societal perception of RC power. For instance, Ahmed stresses that there was a hierarchy within the RC and those who occupied a higher position usually belonged to the 'liquidation group' (*jamā'āt al-taṣfīyah*), whose tasks in the 1990s was to annihilate the 'enemies of the revolution'[98] (see Chapter 5, Section 2). The findings show that, when the interviewees were asked about the RC, they initially reacted labelling RC members to 'informants' (see Chapter 5 Section 4) or 'strong supporters' of Qadhdhafi. However, as the interviews progressed, more nuanced dynamics emerged on the profile and the reasons that led someone to join the RC, whose popular legitimacy appeared to be very low.[99] The interviewees depicted a picture of the RC that calls into question their staunch support and loyalty for the regime, and instead focuses on those general forces and motivations at work that characterized the organization's opportunistic behaviour. They clarify that many people joined the RC in order to take advantage of such a system, to get access to those opportunities that, otherwise, would not be available or, more simply, for 'money, power and protection.'[100] Tareq provides an example from the late 1980s:

> My neighbour managed to send his sons to study in Romania. Did you know how? He was a member of the RC and, at that time, they came up with this idea of being missionaries (*al-mubashshīrīn*), to spread the ideas of The Third Universal Theory abroad. This was only an excuse to go abroad, nothing else. At that time, there were no scholarships or anything like that, so they found their ways.[101]

As Tareq explains, to join the group did not necessarily translate into personal or economic benefits. People, however, soon began to realize how to be in the RC allowed to manoeuvre the law 'at your advantage.' In other words, while the regime assigned an important ideological

[97] Moncef Djaziri (1987) 'La dynamique des institutions et la structure du pouvoir en Libye 1978-1987' [Institutional dynamics and structure of power in libya 1978-1987] In : *Annuaire de l'afrique du nord* (Annuary of north africa) 26 (Paris : Centre national de la recherche scientifique), pp. 451-476, p. 465.
[98] Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya*, p. 120.
[99] al-Werfalli, *Political Alienation in Libya*, pp. 75-76.
[100] Author Interviews: Murad, 40 years old, Sheffield, September 2015; Author Interview, Mohammed, 34 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015; Anas, 25 years old, Italy, August 2015; Taha, 33 years old, Italy, August 2015 and many other interviewees.
[101] Author Interview, Tareq, 40 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.

power to the RC, deeming it as the ideological 'engine' of the revolution, its members seemed more interested to obtain personal gains by abusing their 'revolutionary legitimacy.'

The abuse of status and power also recurred among those who joined another RC-related institute: *al-Mathābah*. This institute, whose unique oval-shaped buildings spread throughout Libya, derived its name from the Qu'ran and referred to al-Ka'bah –the most sacred place in Islam, meaning 'the House (*al-Mathābah*) a place of return for the people and [a place] of security.'[102] As the interviewees explained, the regime's adoption of this name was supposed to make the RC gain reverence and respect among people, turning *al-Mathābah* into a place of worship. Following this analogy, the volunteers working in *al-Mathābah* could be seen as prophets or angels who tried to spread the moral and 'revolutionary' values of 'God,' meaning: Qadhdhafi. As prophet and angels love 'God' without expecting anything in return, so those volunteers revered and worked for the 'Father.'[103] Since the purpose of those institutes was to recruit young cadres, they could often be found within universities. As the interviewees explain, *al-Mathābah*-members coordinated the organizations of all the events taking place within the campus, such as the 'cultural weeks.'[104] They were not considered 'diligent students' and continually took advantage of their social status by 'threatening teachers' in order to get 'good marks,' 'mingle with girls,' thus play the system.[105] Although the interviewees point out how those young cadres abused their power, they also note that those who joined *al-Mathābah* 'did not necessarily support Qadhdhafi' or 'were faithful to him.' In other words, convenience and power motivated their decision to join the group, suggesting that dissimulation reigned supreme even amongst those who belonged to the regime-affiliated organizations.

Another interviewee, Hamid, describes the struggle to apply for a job as assistant teacher after the dean of the university, who suspiciously considered him as 'too religious,' asked for a registration certificate from the RC. Although one of the prerequisites for obtaining this

[102] "And [mention] when We made the House (*al-Mathābah*) a place of return for the people and [a place of] security. And take, [O believers], from the standing place of Abraham a place of prayer. And We charged Abraham and Ishmael, [saying], "Purify My House for those who perform Tawaf and those who are staying [there] for worship and those who bow and prostrate [in prayer]." See The Qur'an, Surah Al-Baqarah, 2:125, available online at: https://quran.com/2/125 (access date 14 August 2016).
[103] Fieldwork notes, Mohammed, 28 years old, Manchester, September 2015; Phone conversation with Nuri, 46 years old, Hull, and Ahmed, 28 years old, Italy, February 2017.
[104] This event, in particular, took place every year around 7th April, a date that also had a profound relevance for those opposing the regime policies, as shown in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5, Section 1).
[105] Author Interview, Farag, 27 years old, Manchester, September 2015.

certificate was to attend a series of 'revolutionary' lectures two-three times per week, Hamid found a way to get around it:

> Do you know what I used to do? If the lecture was between 5 and 7pm, I used to arrive around 6.45, sign my attendance and then leave.[106]

Hamid joined the RC in order to protect himself from regime scrutiny - being seen as 'too religious.' While this passage shows Hamid's ability to maintain a certain distance from the group by interacting as little as possible, it also suggests how he now rationalises his participation in the group.

Other interviewees, such as Omar, describe how they obtained the 'RC card' in order to 'be on the safe side,' as it allowed them to apply for a scholarship to study abroad. Omar offers an analogous story, drawing on the story of his employer. His narrative starts depicting the employer as 'a pure RC,' but Omar later explains:

> His cousin had been arrested because he was against Qadhdhafi. In order to protect himself, he became a RC member. He prayed to Qadhdhafi everyday [laughing].[107]

Moreover, after the 1996 clashes, the employer decided to change his family name because a member of the Islamist group carried his own. As Omar clarifies, such a decision also related to the routine-control that the regime undertook for those who wished to study abroad:

> For instance, in order to get a scholarship abroad, the regime would search for your surname and, if you have anyone who had been or was in prison for any activities against Qadhdhafi, they would not allow you to go anywhere.[108]

Hamid's employer tries to circumvent the panoptical structure of surveillance by joining the RC and changing his family name. The findings show that what drove the interviewees to join the RC and 'be loyal' was a need for social security, as exemplified in the expression 'money, power and protection.'

[106] Author Interview, Hamid, 34 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[107] Author Interview, Omar, 32 years old, Italy, August 2015.
[108] Ibid.

Some interviewees point out that many of their friends worked within the RC only to get money, as Ibrahim recounts:

> Some people in the RC - even THOSE people [emphasis in his voice] - did not believe in the regime but they had to work. They had to get salaries. There was no other option. […] When I used to ask to one of my best friend why he was working for the RC, he used to reply: 'Ibrahim, I have to work.' This person did not have a qualification. This is why most people relied on government jobs.[109]

Ahmed also raises this point, explaining how two of his friends, who occupied a good position in the RC:

> They did not believe in one word of Qadhdhafi, but they needed that position, that money, so they just went for it.[110]

These passages indicate how dissimulation allowed people to get by and play the system to overcome those structural problems that affected Libyan society, such as unemployment, and improve their lives.

Rabia recounts that, being jobless while trying to get married, he approached the Libyan deputy ambassador in Portugal, asking to be appointed to the RC. As Khaled admits:

> I wanted to be like those people in high positions […] there were few opportunities to improve your life in Libya. It was not for the sake of Qadhdhafi that people used to do this work, although some did. But the majority joined these organizations in order to improve their lives, as few chances were given.[111]

Social mobility and protection were intertwining factors that led people to join the RC, thus requiring them to dissimulate their 'loyalty' and 'faithfulness' toward the ideology of the regime. The narratives not only explain the importance for the interviewees of joining the RC, but they also shed light on the relevance of 'having connections' and knowing somebody within the group.

[109] Author Interview, Ibrahim, 36 years old, Hull, March 2015.
[110] Author Interview, Ahmed, 33 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[111] Author Interview, Rabia, 31 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.

For instance, Naji remembers that in order to study Law at the university, each student was required to memorize, at least, a quarter of the Holy Qur'an. While he was 'planning and studying hard' to pursue such a degree, his efforts failed to meet the requirements. Other students, nonetheless, were accepted into the program without undergoing this test, since their fathers 'knew somebody in the RC.' Unfortunately, as Naji says:

> I had no contacts with someone in power.[112]

Those everyday sketches on the RC reveal that people joined the group as a form of quotidian survival that allowed to pursue a certain career, look for a job or secure protection. Also, these practices avoided an open confrontation against the regime-imposed measures. The findings, therefore, question how 'loyal' and 'faithful' toward the regime were those organizations that supposedly represented 'the ideological vanguard of the masses,' since dissimulation existed and the ideological values of the regime often turned into a mere performance. It is important to understand those everyday mechanisms because they shed light on how they (re)enforced the regime's control despite its lack of legitimacy and political alienation, and they also represented the safest ways for people to survive and get by. The following section unpacks how the opportunistic attitude that represented the RC related to a more widespread culture of 'corruption' in al-Jamāhīrīyah.

6.4 Corruption and *Wasta*

During the late 1980-90s, the Green Book-envisioned society suffered from a number of setbacks. Popular discontent grew, for instance, as a result of the disastrous military involvement in Chad and the occupation of the Aouzou strip.[113] Since its annexation in 1973, the regime had forced numerous people to fight in Chad (see above Section 6.1.2) and in 1987, the Libyan army suffered a major defeat in against the troops of the Chadian president, Hissène Habré. Discontent also stemmed from the consequences of the escalating confrontation with

[112] Author Interview, Naji, 33 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[113] For an analysis of the reasons and costs –both economic and military - of the Libyan involvement in Chad, see John Wright (1989) *Libya, Chad and the Central Sahara* (London: Hurst) and J. Millard Burr and Robert O. Collins (1999) *Africa's Thirty Years' War: Libya, Chad, and the Sudan 1963-1993* (Oxford: Westview Press).

the West, which culminated with the imposition of international sanctions in 1992.[114] The regime, therefore, came under attack. In 1993, a group of military officers from the Warfalla tribe in Bani Walid attempted a coup d'état, while Islamist groups started mobilizing in the Eastern part of the country (see Chapter 4 Section 3). al-Jamāhīrīyah's socialist-led economic measures also suffered from a major decline in oil revenues due to its collapsed price,[115] which affected further the ongoing mismanagement of public funds and poor performance of public projects. In order to maintain its stability, the regime launched two main measures: firstly, a process of economic liberalization (*infitah*) or what Qadhdhafi termed a 'Revolution within the Revolution,'[116] and secondly, a revival of tribal and neo-patrimonial dynamics (see Chapter 4 Section 3).

Starting in 1987,[117] those waves of economic privatization and liberalization responded partly to the desires of the population. For example, the imposition of an air ban on Libya not only blocked the direct access to goods (prior to sanctions more than 30% of goods reached the country by air), but also forced the regime to rely more on the private sector. The regime had to purchase previously accessible goods and equipment, therefore, through substantial payoffs to third parties and their prices inevitably raised above the level set up by the regime. Also, greater dependence on the private sector meant larger power for those, such as high-officers and administrators, who had the necessary currency and contacts to import foreign goods, whose sale to the public took place at overcharged prices. The regime took an ambivalent position toward corruption. It seemed, on the one hand, eager to combat its diffusion, particularly speculation and illicit accumulation of wealth. The same institutions charged to combat those mechanisms, however, ended up accepting the merchants' bribes, such as the

[114] For an economic exploration of Libya under sanctions, see, in particular, Tim Niblock (2001) *Pariah States & Sanctions in the Middle East: Iraq, Libya, Sudan* (London: Lynne Rienner), and Marei A. El Mughrabi (2005) *An Exploration of the Impact of International and Domestic Factors on Economic Reform Programmes in Libya 1987-2004* (Unpublished Doctoral thesis: Northumbria University), pp. 319-330.

[115] Strongly dependent on the hydrocarbon sector, the Libyan economy suffered major losses when the oil price collapsed in 1986, 1993 and 1998, which proved the volatility and lack of economic diversification of al-Jamāhīrīyah's economy.

[116] See Vandewalle (1991) 'Qadhafi's "Perestroika": Economic and Political Liberalization in Libya' In: *Middle East Journal* 45:2, pp. 216-231 and Ronald Bruce St John (2008) 'The Changing Libyan Economy: Causes and Consequences' In: *Middle East Journal* 62:1, pp. 75-91.

[117] Although political debates started in 1987, these measures were officially declared in 1988 during a General People's Congress meeting in Ras Lanuf. They included import restrictions in order to deal with deficits in the balance of trade, and cutting public wages, creation of public-private associations, and much more. See Vandewalle, Qadhafi's "Perestroika," pp. 75-91; Waniss Otman and Erling Karlberg (2007) *The Libyan Economy: Economic Diversification and International Repositioning* (Berling: Springer-Verlag), pp. 218-221; and El Mughrabi, *An exploration of the impact of international and domestic factors on economic reform programmes in Libya 1987-2004*, pp. 189-195.

Purification Committees (see Chapter 4 Section 3). The regime, on the other hand, benefited from corruption because it allowed it to sustain an agenda of economic reform outside the rule of law and bureaucratic normalization, and it also integrated into these renewed mechanisms of patronage and tribalism that aimed to curb its loss of legitimacy. Structural changes, therefore, struggled to take place,[118] and corruption - namely a culture of favours, exchanges and bribes - became a dominant modality of interaction of everyday life.

The following discussion is divided in two subthemes: firstly, how the interviewees characterise the regime as a corrupt entity, run as a family-business, and secondly, how these same dynamics of corruption characterised their everyday life.

6.4.1 A Corrupted Regime

> There are Ben Ali, Mubarak and Qadhdhafi. Standing in the desert, each one of them is asked to divide the money of the country between them and their own people. Ben Ali starts. He draws a line in the sand, he takes the money and says, 'I will throw the money in the air, what ends up on the right side of the line goes to the people, what falls on the left side goes to me.' Then, it's the turn of Mubarak and he draws a circle in the sand, saying 'I will throw the money in the air and what falls in the circle goes to the people, what stays outside of it goes to me.' Then, Qadhdhafi goes. He throws a line in the air and says 'What falls goes to me, what remains in the air goes to people.'[119]

In addition to those jokes that depict Qadhdhafi as the most merciless human being (section 6.2.2), other common Libyan jokes, such as the one above, show that the Libyan leader did not simply refuse to share the money with his people, but he made a fair distribution of resources impossible. In other words, they capture the corruption of the regime. The interviewees also recounted many jokes that included either Qahdhafi's closest affiliates or his family, whose relevance lies in how they shed light on the popular perception of the regime as controlled by a corrupt and selfish circle.

[118] It is interesting to note that the PC soon started abusing their authority, leading to the rise of popular discontent and forcing the regime to establish another committee – 'Volcano Committees' – in order to mitigate their power. See Yehudit Ronen (1997) 'Libya' In: Bruce Maddy-Weitzman (ed.) *Middle East Contemporary Survey XXI* (Westview Press), p. 546.
[119] Author Interview, Hussein, 24 years old, Italy, July 2015.

> Qadhdhafi sends Abū Bakr Yūnis and ‘Abd al-Salām Jallūd for a diplomatic mission in Saudi Arabia and, as they arrive, the King invites them for dinner. Sitting at the royal table, Yūnis realizes that the entire cutlery is made out of gold. Without hesitation, he grabs a fork and puts it in his pocket. However, Jallūd, who had been witnessing to the whole scene, suddenly decides to entertain the guests at the table and says ‘Look, I will now put this fork into my pocket and you will find it back into my colleague, Abū Bakr Yūnis, pocket.’[120]

The most relevant aspect of this joke concerns the corrupt qualities of two of the closest al-Jamāhīrīyah’s regime-officials, Abū Bakr Yūnis and ‘Abd al-Salām Jallūd, who compete in stealing golden cutlery on a Saudi Arabian royal table. This aspect establishes a thematic continuum with other collected jokes that highlight the corrupted nature of Qadhdhafi and his family.

Many interviewees point out that the country was managed as a family-business, which allowed Qadhdhafi’s sons to have the most lucrative positions and unique privileges. All siblings of Qadhdhafi, in fact, occupied important positions at the financial, political or military level. For instance, the eldest son, Muhammad Muammar, was the head of the Libyan Olympic Committee, and of three national telecommunication companies (Almadar, Telecom and General Post); Hannibal was the head of the General National Maritime Transport company, specializing in oil export; Khamis controlled one of the most powerful military brigades in the country, called ‘Khamis Brigade’; Mutassim and Saif al-Islam were considered to be possible heirs to the throne and were heavily involved in the political dynamics of the country.[121] The collected narratives present episodes related to the Qadhdhafi family, expressing disdain and outrage over their corrupt conducts. For instance, Hakim explained that one day the regime closed down the motorway, linking Libya to Tunisia, ‘just because Saadi wanted to try out his new motorcycle.’[122] Also, Hussein remembers when the regime forced him to relocate from Tripoli to Tarhuna University because Aisha, Qadhdhafi’s daughter, decided to study law in Tripoli and the university stopped allowing men to attend.[123]

[120] Author Interview, Abdul Rahman, 45 years old, Hull, September 2015.
[121] For a more detailed explanation of all the siblings’ involvement in the country affairs, see Ethan Chorin (2012) *Exit Gaddafi: The Hidden History of the Libyan Revolution* (London: Saqi Books), pp. 103-106.
[122] Author Interview, Hakim, 32 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[123] Author Interview, Hussein, 28 years old, Italy, July 2015.

The interviewees often mocked Saadi,[124] acknowledging that he was allowed to run the Libyan Football Federation and play for a famous Italian team, Perugia, only because 'he was the son of Qadhdhafi.' In particular, they directed me toward an online video of an official football match in Libya, where Saadi takes a penalty, hits the post and thus misses it, yet he acts as if he scored it. He celebrates and takes his shirt off, leaving commentator, referee and fans incredulous. For the interviewees, this episode is a clear example of a corrupt family that abused its power, which is also captured by a popular joke on the incompetence and corruption of Qadhdhafi and his son, Saadi:

> After having played a football game and missed a penalty at the last minute, Saadi goes back home and tries to sleep. He is, however, restless. It is 2 o'clock in the morning and he cannot sleep. His mother, Safia, noticing that his son is up in the middle of the night, approaches him and asks, 'My son, what's going on? Why aren't you sleeping?' The son goes, 'The referee gave me a penalty at the last minute but I wasted it.' So, the mother replies, 'Go to sleep! Your father wasted the whole country and he is sleeping since 8 o'clock.'[125]

The joke plays on Saadi and his family legacy of 'wasted' possibilities. Like his father, who failed the country, the son wastes an important ('a penalty') and almost unthinkable ('at the last minute') chance for his team to win. The mother functions as the voice of 'Reason,' underlining how 'to waste chances' is a typical trait of the family and thus there is no reason to be restless. The joke not only stresses the corrupted control of Libya by the Qadhdhafi family, but also those underlying contradictions that characterised their authority.

For instance, 'The Green Book' considered football as a deceitful sport for the masses[126] and football commentators were not allowed to call players by their names, as many interviewees recounted.[127] Saadi, however, appointed himself as the 'king of football,' disregarding such

[124] Saadi also participated in other lucrative activities. He controlled the Libyan film industry and was trying to develop a free-trade zone in Zuwara, see also WikiLeaks (2009) 09TRIPOLI198, available online at: http://cables.mrkva.eu/cable.php?id=194957 (access date: 17 February 2017).
[125] Author Interview Ali, 34 years old, Durham, September 2014.
[126] "It is unconceivable for crowds to enter athletic fields and stadiums to watch one or more players, without practicing the games themselves […] Sport, like power, should be for the masses, and just as wealth and weapons should be for the people, sport as a social activity should also be for the people." Al Gathafi, *The Green Book,* pp. 79-80.
[127] See also YouTube (2014) Nihā'ī buṭūlat lībyā li-kurat al-qadam bayna al-ahlī wa-al-itiḥād mawsim 1993-1994 (al-shawṭ al-thānī) [Final game of the libyan football championship between al-ahly and al-ittihad season 1993-1994 (second half)], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=21gleEXwAes (Access date: 17 February 2017).

rules, while rumours circulated on the regime and, particularly, Qadhdhafi's son not allowing more skilful Libyan football players, such as Tareq Al-Tayeb, to join prestigious European clubs.[128] Unsurprisingly, numerous anti-regime protests took place in football stadiums or in relation to football incidents throughout the 1990s and the 2000s.[129] A famous incident took place in the summer of 2000 during a football match between the two Al-Ahly teams, respectively from Tripoli and Benghazi. During the game, the Tripoli-based and Saadi-owned team was being awarded one penalty kick after another. In response, the supporters of the Benghazi team let a donkey enter the pitch, wearing Saadi's jersey. The reaction of the regime forces was fierce and Al-Ahly's headquarters in Benghazi were completely demolished.[130]

Other jokes target the 'reformist' son of Qadhdhafi, Saif al-Islam, mocking his privileged status:

> The teacher asks its class to name an animal who can fly. One of the students raises his hand and says 'Elephant!' The teacher – surprised – replies 'An elephant? Elephants don't fly. What's your name?' The student goes, 'My name is Saif al-Islam al-Qadhdhafi.' Immediately, the teacher says, 'Oh yes! Elephants do fly!'[131]

> The teacher approaches Saif al Islam and asks him to name the country whose borders are drawn on the blackboard. Without hesitating, Saif replies, 'That's the farm of my father!'[132]

It is interesting to note how the school-setting of both jokes appears to mock the educated status of Saif al-Islam, who also obtained a doctoral degree in the UK. Those jokes, in particular, cohere with those interviewees who interpreted his promises and plans of reform as 'empty talk' (see Chapter 7 Section 3). The first joke captures the impunity and privileges granted to the son

[128] Author Interview, Ali, 35 years old, Newcastle, August 2015; Author Interview, Ahmed, 33 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015; Author Interview, Musa, 35 years old, Hull, March 2015. See also interview with Tareq al-Tayeb in Libya Akhbar (2016) Kayfa mana'a abnā' al-qadhdhāfī al-tāyib min al-iḥtirāf fi yūfantus [The sons of qadhdhafi prevent al-tayeb from joining 'juventus'], available online at: https://www.libyaakhbar.com/sports/160753.html (access date: 17 February 2017).

[129] See, for instance, Chorin, *Exit Gaddafi*, and George (2013)' Civil Activism and the Roots of the 2011 Uprising' in: Jason Pack (ed.), *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future* (London: MacMillan).

[130] See Juliane von Mittelstaedt (2011) 'Libya's Soccer Rebellion: A Revolution Foreshadowed on the Pitch of Benghazi' In: *Spiegel Online*, available online at: http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/libya-s-soccer-rebellion-a-revolution-foreshadowed-on-the-pitch-of-benghazi-a-774594.html (access date: 17 February 2017); and Xan Rice (2011) 'Libya: A donkey taunt, the Gaddafis and a fatal footballing rivalry ' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/may/25/libya-gaddafi-al-ahly-football-benghazi (access date: 17 February 2017).

[131] Author Interview, Reem, 25 years old, Italy, August 2015.

[132] Author Interview, Ahmed, 28 years old, Italy, August 2015.

of Qadhdhafi, through the teacher's acknowledgment of an absurd idea ('elephants do fly'). It does not matter what the actual statement says, nobody can oppose a Qadhdhafi. The second joke instead captures the corrupt attitude and abuse of power as unveiled by Saif's reply ('that's farm of my father'), which, consequently, deems Libyans as 'animals.'

Other interviewees, as demonstrated previously (section 6.2.2), employed such a metaphor in order to stress the familial and mafia-like management of the country by the Qadhdhafis. Mansour, for example, says that:

> They used to treat Libya like their home, and treat all others like goats … we were like animals. The corruption was in a closed circle of people. We called them 'the fat-cats.'[133]

All those narratives convey abuse of power, corruption and personalised rule, emphasizing how these characteristic ran - in different ways - through the different members of the family. Rajab offers an emblematic narrative that describes how the aesthetic vulgarity[134] of everyday life actions can translate people's outrage against a corrupt regime. Rajab belonged to a large family, where only two brothers were working and the rest were either students or living at home, and the main source of income came from her mother. She worked as a cleaner for the People's Committees in Zawiya and, since she was old and suffered from heavy rheumatism, Rajab often helped her to carry out the 'hard work,' cleaning toilets and bathrooms:

> There was this big picture of Qadhdhafi on the wall at the entrance of the building. Whenever I passed that picture, I scraped my throat and spat on him. Every time […] He is rich, we are poor. In rich countries like Libya, people…I am not saying that they should not work…but they should have a better life, a better salary.[135]

The rasping sound of a scraping throat and the timely cadence of a spit on Qadhdhafi's picture become the signifiers, the bodily and vulgar elements that convey Rajab's disgust and dissatisfaction with the conditions of his life, as well as the regime abuse of power. The idea that 'He [Qadhdhafi] is rich and we [the people] are poor' summarizes the fulcrum of this narrative. It indicates the tension lying between the impossibility for a young man - in his early

[133] Author Interview, Mansour, 40 years old, Durham, September 2014.
[134] Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*, pp. 102-141.
[135] Author Interview, Rajab, 35 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

30s - of finding a job and the necessity to hang on his mother's profession as a cleaner, representing the main source of income for the whole family.

The interviewees also discussed how the regime used patronage to govern, reviving tribal alliances in order to gain the loyalty of people and ensure its stability. Although 'The Green Book' defined the tribe as a 'social umbrella,' and disapproved of its involvement in the realm of political affairs;[136] the regime, under challenging times, started relying on those existing social connections. It embedded them into a larger production of discourses of patronage and corruption [137] in order to secure its rule and stability. In particular, the combination of international sanctions and domestic instability –brought the regime to establish the 'popular social leadership.' This decision came, particularly, in reaction to the October 1993 attempted coup from an allied and prominent tribe, al-Warfalla, which – together with Mergarha and al-Qadhdhafa – occupied a leading position in the armed and security forces. This new institution was composed of the 'respected natural leaders' of the local communities and, although the policy text did not specify who were those leaders, "the authorities were seeking to draw in […] tribal leaders, and the emphasis was on rural rather than urban areas."[138]

Ihsan describes this new mechanism adopted to control and govern the population, He relays how the regime interfered in the election process of the People's Committee's leader, which was usually and collectively appointed by each village. The regime instead started appointing the leader from its most loyal tribes, offering small favours in exchange, which entailed a new car, a monthly salary and a trip to Sirte for the 'respected leader':

> It was a Mazda 323, then a Mitsubishi and then a Toyota HiLux. After that, they delivered a new car, a Nubira. The government subsidised half of its price and, if you would pay the other half, you could keep it […] Small corruption, but people liked it [laughing].[139]

As Ihsan continues, the interference of the regime created conflicts and tensions, such as the one between two tribes, al-Obeidat and al-Ghaity, in his town, Tobruk. The fight rose because the position of leader was socially important. It allowed one help relatives or people from the same tribe to find a job or access other benefits. Those tribal mechanisms, however, neither

[136] Al Gathafi, *The Green Book*, p. 63.
[137] Igor Cherstich (2014) 'When Tribesmen do not act Tribal: Libyan Tribalism as Ideology (not as Schizophrenia)' In: *Middle East Critique* 23:4, pp. 405-421.
[138] Niblock, *Pariah States & Sanctions in the Middle East*, p.89.
[139] Author interview, Ihsan, 36 years old, Manchester, September 2015.

represented the essence of Libyan society nor replaced the power of an absent state during al-Jamāhīrīyah. Tribalism constituted another configuration of power relations, which was intimately connected to the larger 'culture of corruption,'[140] favours and bribes used to control Libyan society.

As Mabrooka al-Werfalli argues, corruption was the most important element that has "undeniably deepened the crisis of confidence in the political system as a whole," translating into political apathy and alienation. The interviewees' condemnation of the regime as a corrupt entity, together with those findings presented in the previous chapter, explain further why dissimulation and political alienation represented a dominant modality of interaction between the regime and society. However, the following shows that, while the interviewees acknowledge corruption and condemned its practice, they also participated in forms of everyday corruption.

6.4.2 Everyday Corruption

> Everybody was guilty for this corruption.[141]
>
> It is instilled in us. The corruption is inside us.[142]
>
> To be honest, it was not just the family of Qadhdhafi, his relatives, supporters, and loyalists from different tribes. It was everybody.[143]

Corruption can assume different meaning and take numerous forms and, as Latif narrates, 'smuggling'[144] is one among them. Coming from the tribe of al-Qadhdhafa, Latif recounts a visit of Saif al-Islam, the reformist son of Qadhdhafi, to the city of Sebha. While the purpose of Saif's visit was to address the youth, his speech turned into a series of strong accusations

[140] al-Werfalli, *Political Alienation in Libya*, pp. 82-83.
[141] Author Interview, Kamla, 36 years old, Reading, September 2015. Author Interview, Hakim, 29 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[142] Author Interview, Ahmed, 53 years old, Sheffield, August 2015.
[143] Author Interview, Tareq, 40 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.
[144] See Hamza Meddeb (2011) 'L'ambivalence de la course à 'el khobza': Obéir et se révolter en Tunisie' [The ambivalent search for bread: obedience and revolt in tunisia] In: *Politique Africaine* [African Politics] 121, pp. 35-51 and (2012) *Courir ou mourir: course à el khobza et domination au quotidien dans la Tunisie de ben ali* [Run or die : the search for bread and quotidian domination in ben ali Tunisia] (Unpublished PhD Thesis: Paris Institute of Political Studies, Sciences Po); Mohamed A. Ramady (ed.) (2016) *The Political Economy of Wasta: Use and Abuse of Social Capital Networking* (Switzerland: Springer).

against the tribe for smuggling subsidised products to neighbouring countries. However, as Hamza continues, one member of the audience stood up and replied:

> Yes, it is true, we smuggle products! The government gave me a job that has nothing to do with my qualifications and the salary is peanuts. So, I smuggle to make more money. And yes! We smuggle instead of having other people doing it. Because we are not against you or your father, we don't want to bring problems. You are our blood.[145]

The reaction of the people, as well as the reference to 'blood' lines, appear as a reminder to Saif al-Islam of the constitutive and necessary function that corruption had for the stability of the regime. People stood up and defended such a system, stressing how its permissibility represented the bases of popular consensus for the same regime. They benefited from it, and thus supported the regime as long as it allowed its functioning. To counter its illegality, therefore, meant questioning the regime's stability at its core. While the regime reinforced its supervisory and controlling capacity by involving the whole population in those practices, as the narrative of Naji in the above section explained, this narrative shows how people turn into the best defenders of a set of everyday practices that includes and protects them.[146]

As was shown in the discussion of the findings on the RC, the interviewees participated to this everyday economy of favours, benefits and exchanges. Zahy explains, for instance, that 'in Libya you get what you want through the right people.' In 2006, looking for a job as lecturer, Zahy approached a very a young man, Mohammed, belonging to the al-Qadhdhafa tribe and, together with him, paid a visit to the Head of the University in order to talk about jobs.

> We went there, and the secretary told us that the Head of the University was in a meeting […] Mohammed told her to go inside the meeting room and tell him that 'Mohammed al-Qadhdhafi is out, waiting for him.' As she went inside, the Head, who was a very old professor, came out immediately and said, 'Hello Mohammed! How are you? I am in a meeting, could you please come inside?' We entered the room, Mohammed spoke to him and I got the job.[147]

[145] Author Interview, Hamza, 40 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[146] Drawing on the case of Tunisia under Ben Ali, Beatrice Hibou also argues that corruption functions as a disciplinary mechanisms. See Beatrice Hibou (2011) *The Force of Obedience: The Political Economy of Repression in Tunisia* (Cambridge: Polity Press), p. 277.
[147] Author Interview, Zahy, 31 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.

The responsiveness of the 'old professor' to the call of 'a very young man' may stem from the willingness of the Head of the University to avoid any problems vis-à-vis the regime, thus reinforcing the existing mechanisms of surveillance. This 'connection' allows Zahy to circumvent the problem of unemployment and succeed in finding a job within the university structure. Zahy did 'not support Qadhdhafi,' as he claimed, but found those practices necessary to survive. In so doing, he (re)iterated a dominant hierarchy of power that posited Qadhdhafi and his tribe at the top of the social pyramid.

Another interviewee, Khaled, offers an important and intricate explanation. Looking for a job after his graduation, Khaled describes how he approached one of his friend ('a minister') and asked whether there were any chances to work at the Audit Bureau within the Ministry of the Economy.

> He said 'Yes.' As long as I had my military service done […] I went for the military service but I attended only for two weeks because I had a relative there who sorted out my position. I got this job offer only in 20 days...[148]

Similar to Zahy, Khaled relies on the 'right people' to obtain a job in the public sector, as well as avoiding the military service. The latter, in particular, was a practice that many other interviewees also recounted.[149] In the second part of his narrative, however, corruption assumes different meanings. In 2009, the Ministry of the Economy assigned him - together with two other colleagues - to work for a public construction company located in the south of Libya in 2009. Since their arrival, as Khaled recounts, the owner of the company tried to offer favours or money in order to stop them from looking 'too carefully' into the company's documents. Refusing any proposals, the whole team soon realized that more than one million LYD of public funds were missing from the company's records only in the last year. Such a discovery, however, did not trigger an enquiry or investigation, rather it only managed to create more problems and concerns for Khaled and his colleagues. Since the owner of the company was married to the sister of a very close affiliate of Qadhdhafi, when Khaled visited the company a month later, the manager urged him to leave and threatened to shoot. Fearing for his life, Khaled called up the Minister:

[148] Author Interview, Khaled, 35 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[149] Author Interview, Mukthar, 37 years old, Nottingham, April 2015; Author Interview, Musa, 35 years old, Hull, March 2015; Author Interview, Mustapha, 42 years old, Sheffield, September 2015; Author Interview, Hamid, 34 years old, Reading, September 2015 and many others.

> He told me 'Khaled, get out immediately, the Ministry is not responsible for anything that might happen to you, even if the manager decides to shoot you.' But I asked him, 'What about the papers and reports?' He told me, 'We do not need papers or reports. Get the driver with you and leave the city.' That is what I have done.[150]

The narrative of Khaled presents *wasta* as a form of 'checked-illegality,'[151] a mode of governing that prevents people to speak out and criticize the regime, offering them the means to survive and obtain a job. The second passage, nonetheless, shows the dysfunctional symptoms of a power structure that acquires legitimacy through patronage and neo-patrimonial dynamics. Those official institutions created to report illegal activities or, more simply, to serve the people lose completely their value, contributing further to the spread of political alienation and thus lowering the levels of popular legitimacy for the regime. In addition, Khaled's struggle to report corruption echoes the above narrative on the visit of Saif al-Islam to Sebha and the ill-fated story of the journalist and RC member, Daif al-Ghazal. Criticizing the state of corruption in Libya, while urging Libyan intellectuals to form a civil society committee against such endemic problem,[152] al-Ghazal was abducted on 21st May 2005 by members of the internal security. A few days later, his dead body was found showing signs of torture and a bullet wound to the head.

This latter aspect is fundamental because, as the findings suggest, it shows how everyday corruption allowed the regime to maintain its stability and control, while contributing to the gradual loss of legitimacy and underperformance of public service. In such a situation, where citizens condemn the regime as 'corrupt,' they also participate to this economy of favours and bribes. Ahmed remembers how the Dean of the University, who used to own a computer-shop, took advantage of public funds. While any university order would normally take months to be fulfilled, computers arrived 'the day after':

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[150] Author Interview, Khaled, 35 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[151] Hibou, *The Force of Obedience*, p. 274.
[152] See Reporters Without Borders (2005) 'Opposition journalist Daif Al Ghazal tortured to death,' available online at: https://rsf.org/en/news/opposition-journalist-daif-al-ghazal-tortured-death (access date: 03 March 2017); and al-Watanona (2006) 'The Biography Of A Journalist Who Stood Up To Corruption,' available online at: http://www.libya-watanona.com/hrights/lhrs/lh10066c.htm (access date: 03 March 2017). The government jailed another writer, Abd al-Raziq Mansuri, for similar reasons, see Human Rights Watch (2005) *Before the Rule of Law comes to Libya*, available online at: https://www.hrw.org/news/2005/11/02/rule-law-comes-libya (access date: 03 March 2017).

> Why? Because he owns a computer-shop and the money goes directly into his pocket. He gains more money through commissions. Corruption was without limits, as my father used to say 'Even the sea needs more water.'[153]

This anecdote shows the intricate relationship between public procurement and corruption that existed in al-Jamāhīrīyah. Public procurement refers to those government administrative activities that concern the purchasing of the goods and services from the private sector, in the form of equipment, machineries, technology, etc. The culture of corruption consisted of those quotidian and wasteful expenditures of public funds, which permitted people to make extra profit. While reliable procurement practices turn public funds into functioning infrastructure and services, this narrative shows how, from the regime to society, the 'farm'/'family' model was replicated, creating a strong individualist culture that opposed and rejected the egalitarian and collective vision of the 'People's Power.'

Other interviewees recounted how everyday corruption among people entailed the misappropriation of public funds for personal gains. For instance, working in the hydrocarbon sector, Abdul Aziz discusses how the inflated cost of spare parts allowed some to gain more money:

> Those purchases took place via Italy, UK, US, Germany and the corruption was in-between, with the supplier. It was an easy way to make money. You buy something whose price is worth one LYD, and you pay 400 LYD. You get a cash back of 300 LYD. The public company pays.[154]

Similarly, Hamid offers a concrete example of 'the waste of money that took place in the health sector in broad daylight,' which affected its performance as a whole. Hamid points out that any administration would very often decide what supplies to buy according to their value rather than their necessity, since a higher value of the supply corresponded to a higher commission for the administrator/s. Drawing on his professional experience, he tells the story of a ventilator and its so-called 'oxygen cells':

> Every few months, you need to replace the oxygen cells of the ventilator. They [oxygen cells] look like a bulb and they cost around five dollars. They are very

[153] Author interview, Ahmed, 33 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[154] Author Interview, Abdul Aziz, 45 years old, Reading, September 2015.

> cheap. When the company installs the ventilator, it brings usually five-six replacement bulbs but, when those bulbs ran out, the administration does not buy new ones. Rather it purchases a new ventilator, which costs about 20,000$. The administrators gain on the commissions, and so – again - money is being wasted, service is not provided.[155]

While corruption appears as an endemic component of quotidian life in al-Jamāhīrīyah, which lowers the levels of public trust and confidence in the government, thus creating political alienation, these narratives cloud the distinction between the 'regime' and 'society,' stressing how the latter also contributed to take away public benefits meant for their fellow citizens. In other words, quotidian practices did not break away from the corrupt behaviour of those officials that the interviewees condemned. As al-Werfalli also argues, Libyans appeared to interpret corruption in two completely different manners: on the one hand, they condemned those 'corrupt' officials whose behaviour went unpunished and, on the other hand, they engaged in similar practices as 'heroes who steal from the real thief,' meaning: the state.[156]

The discussion of these findings demonstrated that corruption can assume contradictory meanings, thus becoming a 'contested signifier.' People associate different meanings to it in order to achieve their own objectives.[157] While the interviewees condemned the regime as corrupt, which explains further their political alienation and everyday dissimulation of regime's ideals; they also acknowledged how they engaged in similar practices and used the country's resources at their own personal advantage. This shows how the adoption of those condemned practices contributed to the (re)production of a larger normative discourse of corruption. These everyday actions, therefore, institutionalised a societal culture that encouraged disrespect toward the rule of law,[158] while replicating the so called 'family-run/farm-like' model adopted by the regime.

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[155] Author Interview, Mansour, 42 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[156] al-Werfalli, *Political Alienation in Libya*, pp. 83-84 and pp. 102-103.
[157] Lucy Koechlin (2013) *Corruptions as an Empty Signifier: Politics and Political Order in Africa* (Leiden: Brill), p. 104.
[158] For corruption as an everyday practice of state (re)production, see Rajnarayan Chandavarkar (2007) 'Customs of Governance: Colonialism and Democracy in Twentieth Century India' In: *Modern Asian Studies*, 41(03), p. 443; Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria (2011) 'Ordinary States: Everyday Corruption and the Politics of Space in Mumbai' In: *American Ethnologist* 38:1, pp. 58-72; Donatella della Porta & Alberto Vannucci (2012) *The Hidden Order of Corruption: An Institutional Approach* (London: Routledge); Martyn Egan & Paul Tabar (2016) 'Bourdieu in Beirut: *Wasta*, the State and Social Reproduction in Lebanon' In: *Middle East Critique* 25:3, pp. 249-270.

6.5 Conclusion

The chapter examined how the interviewees' quotidian practice of life constantly shifted between (re)iterating the power of the regime and trying to manoeuvre its mechanisms. The conceptual insights explained the inherent ambiguity of mundane actions in a situation where unbelief and political alienation become the dominant modality of interaction between the people and the regime. The chapter showed that dissimulation, on the one hand, allowed the interviewees to keep their thoughts private, to escape the disciplinary control of the regime, and get by in their everyday lives. It granted space to manoeuvre and play safely with the 'public transcripts of power,' thus avoiding an open and more dangerous confrontation with the regime. From the perspective of al-Jamāhīrīyah, on the other hand, the interviewees' quotidian participation in and performance of these imposed measure signalled their capacity to reiterate an officially sanctioned vision of life. In other words, the interviewees' cynicism, humour or disbelief only (re)produced the necessary conditions of obedience and stability.

The chapter showed how the interviewees admired and revered the 'exceptional' traits of the 'father,' Qadhdhafi, through a circulation of emotions that ranged from awe and wonder, while simultaneously mocking and criticizing its 'magical' status. It showed that a similar dynamic emerged in relation to the interviewees' everyday interactions with 'The Green Book,' where performance of certain rituals took place in a condition of complete unbelief and utter necessity. These characteristics also existed among those who joined the organization that supposedly represented 'the ideological vanguard of the masses,' the Revolutionary Committees. While the findings showed that a lack of genuine support often characterised their relation with the regime, it also pointed out the forces at work that motivated the interviewees to dissimulate, which entailed a desire for 'money, power and protection.' In addition, the chapter examined how all these dynamics also affected the emergence and maintenance of a culture of corruption, namely an economy of bribes, personal and tribal connections. The interviewees not only condemned and mocked corruption within the regime, but they also replicated such a model in their everyday lives, stealing money from the government or trying to pursue their professional careers by contacting the 'right people.' The chapter demonstrated, therefore, the dual effect of the ambiguous nature of everyday practice on the dynamics of power and resistance in al-Jamāhīrīyah: firstly, it allowed the regime to maintain its authority, (re)iterating those necessary hierarchies that allowed its functioning, but secondly, it gradually turned Libya – and so the regime - into everybody's farm, progressively eroding its legitimacy.

Building on this analysis, the next chapter considers the quotidian hopes and aspirations for a better future that the interviewees recount.

7. The Futurity of Everyday Life

This chapter examines the third theme of the study, namely the interviewees' quotidian imaginations and hopes for the future, whose findings intertwine with the previously explored themes. Drawing on the conceptual tools of Sara Ahmed, I refer to those everyday aspirations and desires as 'the futurity of everyday life,' as something that people hope for and shapes their political and personal image of a better life. In so doing, the chapter tries to comprehend how fantasies of happiness and desires oriented people toward al-Jamāhīrīyah regime, as well as its theoretical implications. The thematic discussion is divided into three subthemes. The first theme 'Bananas and Chewing Gum' outlines how the interviewees recounted their aspirations for a more consumerist everyday life, where access to goods would replace scarcity. The second theme 'Dreaming Dubai' examines how the interviewees upheld Dubai as a model for the modernisation of al-Jamāhīrīyah. The third theme 'Saif al-Islam: Rat or Hope?' zooms into the raising political role of Qadhdhafi's son, assessing how the interviewees experienced his proposals to modernise the country. The conclusion summarizes the main argument of the chapter and its contribution to the study. The following is a detailed discussion of the subthemes that emerged.

7.1 Bananas and Chewing Gums

The richest country, the poorest people.[1]

Since the early 1970s, the regime embarked on a programme of regime-sponsored economic development, effectively taking control of the entire Libyan economy. A massive process of nationalization of those foreign and domestic exploitative businesses, from oil to retail industry, took place in order to reduce social inequalities and return their ownership to the Libyan people.[2] Following the directives outlined in 'The Green Book,' the role of the regime as guarantor and distributor of the country's economy was consolidated with the launch of al-Jamāhīrīyah. The concept of 'wage-earners' was abolished and replaced with 'partners,'[3] while 'the house belongs to those who live in it' policy (*al-bayt li-sākinihī*) turned tenants into owners

[1] Author Field Notes, UK, April 2015.
[2] Waniss Otman and Erling Karlberg (2007) *The Libyan Economy: Economic Diversification and International Repositioning* (Berling: Springer-Verlag), p. 218.
[3] Ibid, p. 33.

of their rented properties overnight.[4] Discouraging any form of private enterprise, regime-managed popular supermarkets were established, and subsequently joined by the Popular Cooperatives. An extensive programme of subsidies was created, covering basic food commodities such as flour, rice, and sugar, as well as electronic equipment or petrol.[5] A nationwide organization, the National Supply Corporation (NASCo), whose creation dated back to 1971, managed the import of all these products, protected consumers from international prices fluctuation and minimized the burden of inflation.[6]

By the early 1980s, the regime had accomplished numerous of its promises, transforming slums and unhealthy dwellings into modern tenements[7] and offering free education to the majority of the population. In the mid-1980s, the decline of oil revenues and the difficulties of diversifying the economy's reliance on oil brought all those programmes to a halt. In such a situation, where al-Jamāhīrīyah struggled to provide the population with the goods it wanted, the interviewees recount everyday sketches that highlight how the scarcity of goods imposed restrictions on their lives. For instance, they describe the journey to the public supermarkets as:

> It was like a lottery! You stood in a long queue for hours; you paid a little amount of money and then received a bag. But you did not even know what it contained. For big families, this system was ok, because you could get all kinds of clothes' sizes. In small families, it was impossible and you ended up secretly exchanging them with other families.[8]

Another interviewee, Musa, points out that the scarcity of goods did not even allow observing the tradition to buy new clothes during religious festivities. Rather it created fights:

> Sometimes two people could catch the same bag and they would start fighting over it […] we could get clothes that we did not need, so we exchanged them with somebody else who could give you something back.[9]

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[4] Ibid, p. 112.
[5] See Khairia A. H. Sehib (2013) *Consumer Food Shopping Behaviour in Libya* (Newcastle University: Unpublished PhD Dissertation), pp. 22-25; and Food and Agriculture Organization (2011) *Food Security in Libya: An Overview*, available online at: https://www.wfp.org/content/libya-food-security-libya-overview-april-2011 (access date: 26 April 2017).
[6] See Otman and Karlberg, *The Libyan Economy*, p. 143.
[7] Ibid.
[8] Author Interview, Abdullah, 42 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.
[9] Author Interview, Musa, 35 years old, Hull, March 2015.

Both interviews' passages describe how the socialist system of 'lines' turned into a powerful disciplinary aspect of al-Jamāhīrīyah, seizing time through the immobilization of bodies. [10] The moment of 'waiting' turns into a key measurement of the lack of efficiency of the regime, it indicates how the interviewees felt powerless ('it was like a lottery') vis-à-vis a regime that obliged them to wait, while providing random clothing choices. At the same time, those narratives highlight how the interviewees were also capable to develop stratagems to circumvent the overwhelming power of the state. The silent search for 'somebody else,' 'the exchange with other families' were tactics used to adjust their everyday life to those regime-mechanisms, while trying to restore a sense of order and certainty.

While those narratives of the socialist period of al-Jamāhīrīyah discuss, in particular, clothes, others interviewees raise a similar point in relation to 'electronic equipment.' Ismail, for instance, explains that in 1984-85, the regime established the Popular Cooperatives [*al-jam'īyāt al-ta'āwunīyah*], where every family was required to register in order to receive a booklet that, in turn, allowed monthly access to food and other goods. An electronic department also existed in the Popular Cooperatives, but it was rather limited. Ismail, therefore, narrates how people tried to get around such a scarcity:

> Let's say, 1000 people were registered under one cooperative, which only had two or three televisions, one or two freezers. What would those families do? They organized a draft [kur'aa] in order to assign those goods to somebody. And in all my life, I remember we got only a TV from these cooperatives.[11]

Such a practice, as shown in the previous chapter, also catches the ambiguity of the everyday, since it enables people to survive, while avoiding breaching the 'public transcripts of power.'

Those narratives capture the popular spirit that, in part, pushed the regime into a gradual process of liberalization of the economy from 1987 onward, slowly resuming private businesses in order to share the costs of a burdened public sector (see Chapter 4 Section 3). Such a situation, nonetheless, only escalated with the imposition of the international sanctions in 1992, witnessing a steady rise of inflation and corruption (see Chapter 6 Section 4). With

[10] Verdery also makes a similar argument on the immobilization of bodies and the control of consumption in socialist governments; see Katherine Verdery (1996) *What Was Socialism and What Comes Next?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press), p. 47.
[11] Author Interview, Ismail, 32 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.

the egalitarianism promoted by the regime in decline, inflation made state salaries insufficient, and secondary employment became more necessary. This resulted into a lack of commitment among employees, which affected the performance of the public sector as a whole. In this context of shortages and frustration, as well as international sanctions and black markets, quotidian commodities acquired a powerful symbolic meaning, whose specific discursive configurations reveal how the interviewees oriented their everyday fantasies of both happiness and wellbeing vis-à-vis the regime.

For instance, in the late 1980s, Omar explains that fruit and, in particular, bananas could not be found in the country, until the regime suddenly started importing them. In times of shortages, however, the arrival of bananas triggered a real social craze:

> People used to fight over them. Some people died for one or two kilos of bananas. Can you imagine? You sacrifice yourself for a kilo of banana![12]

The British author, Susie M. Sandover, describes the same episode in her autobiography, which signals the symbolic importance of bananas after the US bombing of Libya in 1986:

> Gaddafi made an order of bananas from Nicaragua and the shelves of the government stores were filled with boxes of this imported fruit. The Libyans rushed to the stores to acquire a box and in the ensuing mayhem, it is said that two women were crushed to death and many injured. It was a source of pride to offer people bananas when guests came for tea. People wanted to give their children a treat by letting them taste and see an actual banana and for that they had to queue for hours and fight.[13]

Other interviewees point out that, when bananas arrived in Libya for the first time in the 1980s, nobody knew how to eat it or what it was:

> There are stories saying that people would throw away the inside and eat the skin.[14]

[12] Author Interview, Mohammed, 34 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.
[13] In her autobiography, the author describes her marriage with a Libyan diplomat, see Susie M. Sandover (2016) *Libya: A love lived, a life betrayed 9/36* (Leicestershire: Matador Books), p. 97.
[14] Author Interview, Muftah, 34 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

> I remember a relative who brought one kilo of bananas back from Malta. When his little brother saw them, he asked 'Oh Khalifa, what's that? What is that thing?' Can you imagine?[15]

All these interviews' passages stress the social craze that bananas sparked in Libya, thus speaking back to the regime-controlled policies of food demand and provision. Bananas not only conferred a social status on those who possessed them, as Sandover points out, but also embodied a challenge to those regime-controlled classification of needs and thereby questioned the dominant definition of values, commitments and the good life.[16] The culinary power of banana enabled to transcend the strict socialist measures and imagine an alternative structure of the everyday where abundance qua agency replaced shortages qua control. Other tiny and seemingly unimportant objects capture those emerging fantasies for a different futurity, such as chocolate and chewing gum. Some interviewees reflect on the shortage of chewing gum and chocolate during their childhood in the 1980s:

> I never had a bar of chocolate when I was a child. Not even an ice cream.[17]

> When I was growing up, we were struggling to find some sweets. You could not find chocolate or chewing gums. It was impossible.[18]

The inaccessibility to certain products turned those tiny objects into powerful tools for imagining a different futurity. As Hassan describes chewing gums became like 'hashish':

> People were selling it like hashish in the streets. They approached you and said 'Come here, I have chewing gums, do you want some?' It was something secret and not available at all. Libya was a strange place, when we had money, we could not buy anything. When we had no money, everything was available.[19]

Comparing 'chewing gum' to 'hashish,' Hassan conveys both the secretive and addictive elements of such product. Although numerous difficulties existed to find it, people's secret and quotidian desire for it countered the regime control of imported products. The desire for

[15] Author Interview, Hassan, 29 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[16] Bretha Luthar proposes a similar argument in her study on the everyday culture of Yugoslavia. See Breda Luthar (2010) 'Shame, Desire and Longing for the West: A case study of consumption' In: Breda Luthar and Marusa Pusnik (eds.) *Remembering Utopia: The Culture of Everyday Life in Socialist Yugoslavia* (Washington: New Academia Publishing), p. 346.
[17] Author Interview, Ibrahim, 36 years old, Hull, March 2015.
[18] Author Interview, Nabil, 35 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
[19] Author Interview, Ali, 35 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.

chocolate and chewing gum questioned the status of 'normality' that the interviewees experienced in their everyday lives.

The book of the Libyan writer, Mansour Bushnaf, titled 'Chewing Gum' (*al-'alkah*) whose distribution in Libya was initially banned, allows us to grasp further the role 'chewing gum' played in the everyday popular imaginary. Bushnaf writes that chewing gum summed up the social significance of those years of failing socialist policies and burdening international sanctions:

> Libya fell into the grip of chewing-gum mania. In pursuit of this latest craze, citizens applied for passports, purchased dollars on the black market and queued up in front of airline offices to gain the right to travel overseas and bring back the precious commodity.[20]

He depicts chewing gum as 'a philosophical project,' which obsessed and was debated by an entire society:

> It [chewing gum] became a philosophical project, embodying aesthetic values that were translated into theatre, music, art, pop culture, doctoral dissertations in economics and political science and a classified top-secret dossier that caused much trouble to the security forces. It was debated by rightists, leftists, centre leftists, centre rightist, and so on, to no end. In brief, gum became everyone's obsession."[21]

While the book discusses themes that go far beyond 'chewing gum,'[22] such a metaphor attests to the importance of the so-called 'happy' objects in the everyday life. 'Chewing gum' was an object filled with affect[23] that triggered aspirations and disappointments, philosophical debates, talked about economic reforms, challenged the security services, and thus negotiated the normative schemes of society.

The collected narratives present another aspect that captures the existence of aspirations among young people for a more consumerist, business-oriented society: the voyages to Malta. As Saif remembers, since Libyans did not require a visa to visit Malta, everybody jumped on a plane or a ferry:

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[20] Mansour Bushnaf (2008) *Chewing Gum* (London: Darf Publisher), p.3
[21] Ibid, p. 61.
[22] The book utilizes 'chewing gum' as a metaphor to dwell into more politically charged topics, such as the intellectual decadence of Libyan society and the high level of political repression/surveillance.
[23] Sara Ahmed (2010) *The Promise of Happiness* (Durham: Duke University Press).

> If you had a bit of money, you would fly to Malta. It was 42 LYD return-ticket. It used to take half an hour, and you were there. There was no visa to Malta. There used to be a ferry every day as well, and in a couple of hours you arrived.[24]

He also describes that young people did not simply travel to Malta for 'fun':

> People started to make business from there, buying chocolate, sweets, and clothes, bringing them back. We were trying to make a living, make some money.[25]

Echoing Saif's words, in his book '*The Libyan Paradox*,' Luis Martinez documents further the centrality of those ferry trips to Malta for many young Libyans, representing an 'infringement of political taboos':

> The voyage to Malta provides an opportunity to gain an insight into certain aspects of the political outlook of these younger Libyans. They express their opinions uninhibitedly. The topic of money looms large in their conversations, unsurprisingly for a group whose central preoccupation is trade.[26]

Bananas, chewing gums and those trips to Malta intertwine the findings presented in the previous chapter and, in particular, how dissimulation allowed Libyans to pursue a desire for 'money, power and protection' (see Chapter 6 Section 3). Shopping or business expeditions to Malta, as much as the desire to chew something other than those regime-imposed commodities, highlight the tension between a culture of 'dissimulation' of socialist ideals that structured the official discourse[27] and a private sphere that aspired for a more consumerist society.[28] They capture the alternative meanings of the 'good life' emerging from the interviewees' everyday life during al-Jamāhīrīyah, which challenged the socialist and egalitarian ideals of al-Fatḥ revolution. They point out how those tiny objects embodied fantasies and promises of upward social mobility, which, at times, were pursued by joining the RC or contacting 'the right people.'

While foreign and mostly European goods circulated in Libya during the 1990s, the population struggled to access them due to their exorbitant prices. The slow lifting of the sanctions in 1999 did not trigger the rise of public wages, which instead remained "substantively frozen, with

[24] Author Interview, Saif, 34 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[25] Ibid.
[26] Luis Martinez (2007) *The Libyan Paradox* (London: Hurst & Co), p. 36. The author conducted this research during a period stretching from 1996 to 1998.
[27] Ibid.
[28] For similar insights on the case of ex-Yugoslavians from now Slovenia going to shop in Italy, see Luthar, 'Shame, Desire and Longing for the West,' p. 371.

very minimal salary increases and no merit increases since 1981," [29] causing a lot of dissatisfaction among Libyan public sector employees. In addition, the regime's ambivalent position toward the rise of black markets neither eradicated corruption nor accommodated fully the interviewees' clusters of ordinary desires. The promise of reform, on the one hand, alluded to possibilities of change, such as the abandonment of socialist policies and the creation of a more privatized and consumerist environment. These same processes, on the other hand, remained uncontrolled and only allowed the enrichment of a certain class, widening further the social inequality gap. For these reasons, the Libyan leader intervened several times during the early 2000s, urging the Libyan government to embrace – once again - a real process of privatization of the most important economic sectors, from banking to oil and aviation.[30] At this crossroad, a recurrent theme emerges from the narratives of the interviewees: the dream of turning Libya into Dubai.

7.2 Dreaming Dubai

At the beginning of the 2000s, the regime – once again – seemed prone to undertake officially the necessary measures to privatize the economy. However, the failure to diversify the economy from the hydrocarbon sector and abandon inelastic regime-controlled plans haunted its political and economic situation.[31] According to the 2006 International Monetary Fund (IMF) Report, slow and discontinuous progress characterized the country's development of a market economy. The country suffered from those same problems that hindered its implementation in the previous decade, such as corruption, the lack of transparency, the absence of a clear legal framework,[32] the underperformance of public infrastructures and a rigid labour market.[33] While the Libyan leader often showed his public support for the privatization of the economy, he also appeared reluctant to embrace fully those measures. According to

[29] Otman and Karlberg, *The Libyan Economy*, p. 132.
[30] For a perusal of all the measures taken in order to implement a privatization scheme of the country's economy in the 2000s, see Hesham Farhat Shernanna (2013) *Critical Perspectives on the Efficient Implementation of Privatisation Policies in Libya: Assessing Financial, Economic, Legal, Administrative and Social Requirements* (Unpublished Doctoral Thesis: Durham University).
[31] See Ronald Bruce St John (2008) 'The Changing Libyan Economy: Causes and Consequences' In: *Middle East Journal* 62:1, pp. 75-91.
[32] International Monetary Fund (2006) Country Report No. 06/136, p. 22.
[33] United Nations International Labour Organization (2010) *BTI Libya Country Report*, available online at: http://www.ilo.org/dyn/travail/docs/2073/BTI%202010%20Libya%20Country%20Report.pdf (access date: 26 April 2017).

Qadhdhafi, a strong neo-imperialist and pro-Zionist component guided the policies of those lending international organizations, such as the World Bank and the IMF, toward the Arab world and the African continent.[34] In addition, the intense growth of the population[35] - with more than 50 percent being under the age of 20 years,[36] put further pressure on the labour market[37] and raised demands for social services, particularly in education and health care.[38] The lack of jobs other than in the public sector[39] caused the growth of unemployment.

A recurring story emerges from the collected narratives that captures the ordinary clusters of aspirations for the good life in light of the national and international conditions characterizing Libya since the early 2000s. The story is about the former leader of the UAE, Shaykh Zayed, and his visit to Libya in the early 1970s:

> Did you know that the Leader of the UAE [United Arab Emirates], Shaykh Zayed, came to Libya in 1970 and said that he wanted Dubai to look like Tripoli? Dubai was a desert at that time. And now it's the other way around. In 2007, I went to Dubai and it was amazing.[40]
>
> Shaykh Zayed came to visit Libya from the UAE in the 1970s and he said that he wanted Dubai to be like Tripoli. Now, it's the other way around! Libya is stuck in the 1970s![41]

[34] Ray Takeh (2002) 'The Fate of the Permanent Revolution' In: *The Journal of Libyan Studies* 3:1, p.11.
[35] Gerald Braun and Adele Jones (2014) *Libya – Building the future with youth: Challenges for education and employability* (Bonn: Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, GIZ), available online at: http://www.foresightfordevelopment.org/sobipro/55/1058-libya-building-the-future-with-youth-challenges-for-education-and-employability (access date: 09 May 2017).
[36] World Bank Report (2006) *Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya Country Economic Report*, p.8. Available online at: http://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/918691468053103808/pdf/30295.pdf (access date: 26 April 2017).
[37] On the labour market problems of al-Jamāhīrīyah in the 2000s, see Dia Sadek Abuhadra and Tawfik Taher Ajaali (2014) *Labour Market and Employment Policy in Libya* (Torino: European Training Foundation), pp. 9-11, available online at: http://www.etf.europa.eu/web.nsf/pages/Employment_policies_Libya (access date: 09 May 2017).
[38] See African Development Bank Group (2009) *Libya - Country Engagement Note*, available online at: https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/LIBYA_COUNTRY%20ENGAGEMENT%20NOTE_01.pdf (access date: 28 April 2014).
[39] See Mohamed Ali Mohamed (2014) *Diversification Prospects for Sustainable Libyan Economic Growth* (Unpublished Doctoral thesis, University of Huddersfield), p. 304.
[40] Author Interview, Ali, 30 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[41] Author Interview, Murad, 40 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

> During the monarchy, Libya used to have a Gran Prix of F1 [Formula 1]. Now, it takes place in Doha, in Qatar. We should be like Dubai…and we can be like these countries in the Gulf.[42]

Although the interviewees recount the anecdote in different manners, its conveyed meaning never changes. In the 1970s, Libya's level of infrastructural development had shocked and amazed the former leader of the UAE, Shaykh Zayed, who was visiting the country for dental[43] or eye[44] surgery. In the 2000s, as the interviewees stress, 'it's the other way around,' the Libyan wheel of modernisation and development had spun in the opposite direction for more than thirty years. While the infrastructural development of Libya failed to advance, Dubai and, more generally, the UAE became a trademark of progress in the region. The symbolic and material elements[45] that Dubai embodies allow us to comprehend the significance of this metaphor.[46] For instance, understanding of Dubai's success[47] lies in its architectural landscape, comprising futuristic buildings and skyscrapers[48] – i.e. the largest man-made island - or its enormous shopping-malls.[49] All those megaprojects, together with a flourishing stock-market, allowed the development of a corporate, consumerist-oriented image[50] of the city. The so-called metaphor of Dubai's success, nonetheless, possesses numerous vulnerabilities.[51] It is built on

[42] Author Interview, Salah, 27 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[43] Author Interview, Mahmoud, 31 years old, Hull, September 2015.
[44] Author Interview, Basher, 31 years old, Durham, January 2015.
[45] These academic works unpack the economic, architectural and symbolic elements that make Dubai a metaphor of regional and global success, See Ahmed Kanna (2005) 'The "State Philosophical" in the "Land without Philosophy": Shopping Malls, Interior Cities, and the Image of Utopia in Dubai' In: *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 16:2, pp. 59-73; Jim Krane (2009) *Dubai: The Story of the World's Fastest City* (London: Atlantic Books); Chapter 1 and 2 in Laavanya Kathiravelu (2016) *Migrant Dubai: Low Wage Workers and the Construction of a Global City* (London: Palgrave).
[46] In order to comprehend further the UAE regime rhetoric on Dubai as 'the New Wall Street,' see Kathiravelu, *Migrant Dubai*, p. 32. For a full study detailing the connections between modernization, globalization and Dubai, see Yasser Elsheshtawy (2010) *Dubai: Behind an Urban Spectacle* (Oxfordshire: Routledge).
[47] See media discourse on Dubai success: Abdulrahman Al-Rashed (2015) 'Secret behind Dubai's success,' In: *Arab News*, available online at: http://www.arabnews.com/columns/news/721551 (access date: 01 May 2017); No Name (2015) 'Tolerance a key reason for UAE's prosperity,' In: *The National*, available online at: http://www.thenational.ae/opinion/feedback/tolerance-a-key-reason-for-uaes-prosperity (access date: 01 May 2017); Tommy Weir (2016) 'How Dubai created an environment where everyone has the chance to succeed,' In: *The National*, available online at: http://www.thenational.ae/business/economy/how-dubai-created-an-environment-where-everyone-has-the-chance-to-succeed (access date: 01 May 2017).
[48] Elsheshtawy, *Dubai*, pp. 131-167.
[49] Ibid, pp.178-187.
[50] See Ahmed Kanna (2011) *Dubai: The City as Corporation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press).
[51] On the political vulnerability of Dubai and the UAE, see the work of Christopher Davidson (2005) *The United Arab Emirates: A Study in Survival* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers); (2009) *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success* (London: Hurst & Co); and (2015) *After the Sheiks: The Coming Collapse of the Gulf Monarchies* (London: Hurst & Co).

a highly exploitative system of migrant labours, which forbids them basic human rights,[52] and political authority is concentrated in the hands of a small familial circle. Also, Dubai no free-market paradise; rather the state intervenes pervasively into every aspect of society,[53] and it has turned increasingly oppressive towards its dissidents in the recent years.[54]

While the latter are crucial - but often unmentioned - elements that contribute to the success story of Dubai, the interviewees' dream interacts only with the first part of the equation. Dubai becomes an aspiration, therefore, because they experience and measure its success vis-à-vis their country lagging behind, a Libya in a state of desperation and de-development. As Salim says:

> The majority of people compared Libya to Gulf countries, because we have a similar good: oil. Thus, we are supposed to be very rich, like Qatar, like Dubai. We wanted to have high salaries.[55]

The interviewee's frustration mounts over the difficulties for Libya to match the level of development and high-quality of life that Dubai supposedly provides for its citizens. In addition, some interviewees, like Abdul Hakim, also discuss the lack of education, health services, and jobs:

> Everywhere we went, we saw development. When we travelled outside Libya, we went to other countries, to the Gulf, and we saw their infrastructures: airplanes, hospitals, jobs and education. And what happened in Libya? It went backward. Can you imagine?[56]

Those narratives explain how some interviewees associate Dubai with 'better infrastructure' and 'development,' aspiring for and expecting the 'State' to provide jobs with relatively 'high salaries.' The social demands for public sector jobs with higher salaries also relate to the existing social stigma among many young Libyans toward the possibility to take less

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[52] On the toxic and exploitative relationship between Dubai and migrant work-force, see, for instance, Kathiravelu, *Migrant Dubai* and Human Rights Watch Report (2006) *Building, Towers, Cheating Workers: Exploitation of Migrant Construction Workers in the United Arab Emirates*, available online at: https://www.hrw.org/report/2006/11/11/building-towers-cheating-workers/exploitation-migrant-construction-workers-united (access date: 17May 2017).
[53] In particular, see Davidson, *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success.*
[54] See Davidson (2011) 'The Making of Police State' In: *Foreign Affairs*, available online at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/04/14/the-making-of-a-police-state-2/ (Access date: 01 May 2017).
[55] Author Interview, Salim, 29 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[56] Author Interview, Abdul Hakim, 34 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.

'prestigious' jobs or those requiring intense labour.[57] The rise of unemployment, in fact, did not diminish the intake of foreign sub-Saharan workers in less retributive sectors.[58] The fantasy of Dubai, therefore, does not entail a full-scale implementation of a free-market economy; rather it embodies a futurity that called for a state to provide more than it was actually doing. This insight also aligns with the unwillingness of Libyans to trade "the uncertain economic future of a full-scale market economy for the steady wages and subsidies, which enabled them to enjoy a standard of living envied by neighbouring countries."[59]

Another interviewee, Mohammed, draws a similar connection between the 'goal of the revolution' and the making of Dubai in Libya:

> In 2011, the goals of the Revolution were to build Libya, to have foreign companies coming to Libya. We wanted to build Libya by focusing on infrastructure, education system and the economy. I remember most people saying 'We want Libya to become like the UAE, like Dubai.' This was one of the sayings that summarized the goal of the Revolution.[60]

These findings show how the interviewees upheld the economic and global expansion of Dubai as the goal of the 'Revolution.' The global and mega-development approach of Dubai contains the 'happy' ingredients to turn the everyday life of al-Jamāhīrīyah into the 'good life' of people.

Some interviewees explain that the so-called 'Arab Spring' started due to the dire economic situation of Arab countries, including Libya, and thus social security and high salaries – rather than freedom – lay at the core of the people's demands:

> In the Arab world most people demonstrated because of the economic situation, not just for freedom. They want to travel, make tourism. This is what people are looking for. We don't compare us to the West, each Libyan wishes to live like the citizens in Dubai or Qatar, where they have high salaries. We don't care about politics, we

[57] Mohamed Ali, *Diversification Prospects for Sustainable Libyan Economic Growth*, p. 304.
[58] In 2010, according to unofficial documents, the amount of foreign African workers in Libya totalled 2 million, many of which under illegal status. See United Nations Watch (2010) Libya Must End Racism against Black African Migrants and Others, available online at: http://secure.unwatch.org/site/apps/nlnet/content2.aspx?c=bdKKISNqEmG&b=1313923&ct=8411733 (access date: 26 January 2017).
[59] Otman and Karlberg, *The Libyan Economy*, p. 221
[60] Author Interview, Mohammed, 28 years old, Manchester, September 2015.

> don't care about the regime, elections, who will be the leader. You want to be secure.[61]

In this interview's passage, the interviewee describes Dubai as a model of modernisation that bridges western consumerism with the anti-imperialist position of al-Jamāhīrīyah. 'We don't compare us to the West' can refer to a desire to maintain an Arab identity, yet abandoning excessive confrontational policies with Western countries.

In addition, the dream of Dubai entails 'global ambitions,' [62] a desire to participate to a process of modernisation in collaboration with the West, thus abandoning those anti-imperialist policies that relegated the country to a long period of isolation. This aspect emerges through a juxtaposed reading of those collected narratives that question in an explicit manner Qadhdhafi's anti-imperialist policies vis-à-vis those that considered Dubai as an 'imperialist' base in the region. For instance, Ahmed explains that the anti-colonial rhetoric only served the interests of Qadhdhafi:

> We had one choice, we should be friends - not enemies - with the US. Otherwise you are the loser. […] Qadhdhafi was the first one to be disillusioned but he wanted Libyans to believe in that. He wanted to be the greatest person in the world for us, Libyans […] he used to do businesses under the table with them, as he did with Bush and Obama. Otherwise, he would have ended up like Saddam.[63]

While Ahmed presents the anti-imperialist stance of al-Jamāhīrīyah and, in particular, Qadhdhafi as contradictory, he also acknowledges how such contradictions functioned in order to (re)produce the cult of personality ('he wanted Libyans to believe in that') and maintain his rule ('avoiding Saddam's fate). In both cases, anti-imperialism never benefited the Libyan population, as those long years of international sanctions proved. The dream of Dubai, therefore, suggests to stop fighting 'imperialist' forces and undertake the necessary reforms to improve the lives of the Libyan population.

[61] Author Interview, Naji, 33 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[62] The aspiration to Dubai and the sense of 'longing for the world' also resonates among the voices of young Egyptians. See Samuli Schielke (2015) *Egypt in the Future Tense: Hope, Frustration and Ambivalence before and after 2011* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), p. 156.
[63] Author Interview, Ahmed, 33 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.

Some interviewees, however, rejected the idea of turning Libya into Dubai. They stressed how such a process entailed a loss of sovereignty at the expense of colonial and imperialist forces, while contradicting Qadhdhafi's projects in the African continent.

> For Libya to be like Dubai meant losing its sovereignty and accepting the power of the US.[64]

> The West did not like that Libya rejected the control of the IMF and Qadhdhafi was creating a golden currency for Africa, making it independent from the West […] in 2009 Qadhdhafi spoke the truth against those big powers at the United Nations summit. He did the same among the Arab countries, but nobody ever listened to him.[65]

Those passages capture Qadhdhafi's confrontational stance vis-a-vis those Arab and, particularly, Gulf states – like Saudi Arabia -, which he often labelled as 'puppets of America' and thus an obstacle to the unity of the Arab world.[66] For these reasons, al-Jamāhīrīyah pursued a foreign policy of diplomatic expansion and economic investment toward the African continent.[67] These policies hindered further the normalization with the 'West' because Qadhdhafi, for instance, lobbied the African Union to reject the presence of the US 'African Command' Army in African territory, forcing them to relocate their headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany.[68] Also, Libya sponsored and supported the launch of the first African-owned communication satellite, whose creation put an end to lucrative subcontracts from Western countries.[69]

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[64] Author Interview, Hussein, 28 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[65] Author Interview, Ahmed, 53 years old, Sheffield, August 2015.
[66] During an Arab Summit in 2009, Qadhdhafi denounced King Abdullah as 'a British product and American ally', and defined the Gulf States as 'puppets of the West' in one of his last speeches in 2011, see Adel Darwish (2009) 'Muammar Gaddafi accuses Saudi Arabia's King Abdullah of lying at Arab summit,' In: *The Telegraph*, available online at: http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/middleeast/qatar/5079290/Muammar-Gaddafi-accuses-Saudi-Arabias-King-Abdullah-of-lying-at-Arab-summit.html (access date: 19 May 2017); and YouTube (2012) 'al-Qadhdhāfī : tuz fī Hhamyr al-khalīj' [Qadhdhafi: fuck the fools of the gulf], available online at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=crRCxEPuKpE (access date: 19 May 2017).
[67] See Ronald Bruce St John (2000) 'Looking Back, Moving Forward' In: *The Journal of Libyan Studies* 3:2, pp. 22-31; Christopher Boucek (2002) 'Libya's Curious Relationship with Mugabe's Zimbabwe' In: *The Journal of Libyan Studies* 3:2, pp. 22-31; and Essè Amouzou (2012) *Mouammr kadhafi et la realisation de l'union africaine* [Mu'ammar qadhdhafi and the realization of the african union] (Paris: L'Harmattan).
[68] See Maximilian Forte (2012) *Slouching toward Sirte: NATO's War on Libya and Africa* (Montreal: Baraka Books).
[69] Joseph Wouako Tchaleu (2014) *L'agression Libyenne: La démocratie de guerre* [The libyan aggression : democracy of war] (Paris: L'Harmattan); Robert Nolan (2011) 'The African Union After Gaddafi,' In: *Journal of Diplomacy*, available online at: http://blogs.shu.edu/diplomacy/2011/12/the-african-union-after-gaddafi/ (access

While those narratives align with al-Fatḥ's ideological positioning, they also ironically allow us to understand those forces at work that drew many Libyans closer to the Dubai model, since this dream emerges in opposition to Qadhdhafi's Pan-African ambitions. The main concern of the interviewees toward Qadhdhafi's projects in Africa related to the use of the country's wealth and resources. The interviewees felt that the 'father' failed to provide for his children, focusing instead on those people 'outside of the family:'

> Think as if your father has money and he is not giving it to you and your brothers…but to someone else [in Africa].[70]

> It's like knowing that your father has so much money but he is spending this money outside of the house [in Africa], not for his family.[71]

The rejection of Qadhdhafi's support to the African continent also translated in popular actions. Frustration, in fact, was often directed toward sub-Saharan workers[72] in the form of lynching or racism, and those episodes forced al-Jamāhīrīyah to repatriate them to their native countries more than once.[73] Many interviewees posed a recurring question in order to illustrate how Qadhdhafi's support of Africa was another sign of his personalised and contradictory governing of Libya:

> He always repeated that Libyans should go and invest in Africa, but why was Qadhdhafi not the first one to marry off his daughter to an African man?[74]

This narrative not only highlights the racist stereotypes toward Africans, but also presents how 'Africa' vis-à-vis Dubai and the West stood as a cultural marker signalling 'backwardness' and 'de-development.' Another important theme runs through those narratives: They all adhere to

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date: 17 May 2017) and Dan Glazebrook (2012) 'The imperial agenda of the US's 'Africa Command' marches on,' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2012/jun/14/africom-imperial-agenda-marches-on (access date: 17 May 2017).

[70] Author Interview, Mustapha, 42 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

[71] Author Interview, Yassen, 30 years old, Reading, September 2015.

[72] On the conditions of sub-Saharan workers in Libya, see Vincent Staub (2006) *La Libye et les migrations subsahariennes* [Libya and the sub-saharan migrations] (Paris: L'Harmattan).

[73] Many interviewees, for instance, referred to an uprising in Zawiya, where lynching and protests forced them to leave. Author Interview, Basher, 31 years old, Durham, September 2014. This dimension is also explored in Moncef Ouannes (2009) *Militaires, élites et modernisation dans la libye contemporaine* [Military, élites and modernisation in contemporary libya] (Paris: L'Harmattan), pp. 280-283; and Ethan Chorin (2012) *Exit Gaddafi: The Hidden History of the Libyan Revolution* (London: Saqi Books), p.151.

[74] Author Interview, Hamid, 34 years old, Reading, September 2015; Author Interview, Nabil, 35 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015; Author Interview, Mustapha, 42 years old, Sheffield, September 2015; Author Interview, Sufian, 33 years old, Italy, July 2015.

a patriarchal configuration of power. 'Dreaming Dubai,' in fact, comprised a desire for a father who meets his family's expectations – like the monarchs in the Gulf, opposed to a father – Qadhdhafi - who is accused to marrying the daughter (Libya) off to an African man, thus loss of national sovereignty and control of the country's resources.[75] In other words, the interviewees' statements cohere with a pattern of social relations that privileges paternal authority, as shown in the previous chapter.

While the interviewees' dream of Dubai aspired to a less confrontational stance toward the West, thus rejecting al-Jamāhīrīyah's anti-imperialist discourse, they did not call for the realization of a Western-like democratic model. This fantasy called for a 'father' that could provide and take care more of his children. The next section discusses how a 'new father,' Saif al-Islam, seemed to magnetize those clusters of desires and promises for upward social mobility, higher salaries, better infrastructures and global ambitions.

7.3 Saif al-Islam: Rat or Hope?

From 2003, the name of the third son of Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi, Saif al-Islam,[76] began to be associated with numerous and important political manoeuvres aiming to reform Libya. Directed towards the young generation of Libyans, Saif outlined and developed numerous initiatives that provided a new vision of the future, as the name of the program also testified, 'Tomorrow's Libya' or 'Libya of Tomorrow' (*Lībiyā al-Ghad*).[77] Since the program embodied those clusters of everyday aspirations and desires that Libyans shared, the collected narratives explain how the interviewees experienced and related to the figure of Saif al-Islam.

For instance, Shaykh Hussein explains that Saif al-Islam contributed to democratizing and loosening the atmosphere of surveillance and suspicion that had characterized an important part of the everyday life in al-Jamāhīrīyah. In 2006, Saif started the negotiations for the release

[75] See also how. Schatzberg describes the moral matrix of the 'father' in Middle Africa, see Michael G. Schatzberg (2001) *Political Legitimacy in Middle Africa: Father, Family, Food* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press), pp. 23-24.

[76] For more information on the linkage between Saif al Islam and the country's reforms, see Alison Parteger (2010) 'Reform in Libya: Chimera or Reality' In: *Mediterranean Paper Series*, available online at: http://www.gmfus.org/publications/reform-libya-chimera-or-reality (access date: 08 May 2017).

[77] The report contains the most important points of Lībiyā al-Ghad in terms of economic reforms, see Michael E. Porter and Daniel Yergin (2006) *National Economic Strategy: An Assessment of the Competitiveness of the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya*.

of more than 200 prisoners, affiliated to different Islamist groups that had tried to overthrow al-Jamāhīrīyah, such as the LIFG, which terminated successfully in 2010 with their official renouncement to 'jihad' (armed struggle) against the regime. Shaykh Hussein recounts that, back in the 1980s, the security apparatus reported him and his brother as political opponents - precisely zanādiqah -, a decision that forced him to leave Libya for the UK, after having lived in Sudan and Yemen.[78] Saif's efforts to normalize the regime's relation with those who had been accused at being 'enemies of the revolution' (see Chapter 4 Section 3) encouraged him to travel safely back to the country after 17 years.

The collected narratives demonstrate the attachment of hopes for change to the policies and figure of Saif al-Islam, hinting to a broader societal perception of a possible succession to power from father to son. For instance, Hamid explains that Saif's attempts to draft a constitution and bring back those Libyans who lived in exile, offering them important political positions, were remarkable steps:

> Many people thought that their life would improve with Saif al-Islam coming to power. That's why most people in Libya were waiting for Qadhdhafi to pass his power to Saif […] many Libyans felt that Saif was better than his father.[79]

The interviewee stresses how Saif's policies improved the societal perception of the regime and, in particular, fed hopes for a 'better' everyday life. Another interviewee, Rajab, recounts how Saif's initiatives not only gave hopefulness and raised expectations among people, but also produced a tangible change in society:

> To be honest, we needed a miracle. After 2005, Saif changed many things and we witnessed them. Infrastructure started, universities opened. The majority of Libyans thought the next president of Libya - after Qadhdhafi – would be his son, Saif.[80]

Rajab not only captures the feeling of unyielding predetermination of people's lives under the rule of Qadhdhafi ('we needed a miracle'), but also reveals the circulation of hope in the everyday life during the 2000s. Saif's program of reforms, in fact, embodied a promise of

[78] Author Interview, Shaykh Hussein, 50 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[79] Author Interview, Hamid, 32 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
[80] Author Interview, Rajab, 35 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

happiness, which entailed the realization of those aspirations that the dream of Dubai captured ('infrastructure started, universities opened').

While 'chewing gum' and 'banana' captured the desire for a more consumerist society, 'universities and infrastructures' also alluded to what the interviewees experienced as social services that al-Jamāhīrīyah failed to provide. These elements regulate desire and share a proximity to happiness and the good life,[81] which derives from imagining happiness "as what you get in return for desiring well."[82] This aspect emerges in the narrative of Mansour, who points out how the figure of Saif al-Islam not only magnetized people's aspirations, but also offered concrete services, such as scholarships for studying abroad:

> How did Saif al-Islam satisfy his people? Through *Lībiyā al-Ghad*, he built more infrastructure and, for instance, 4000 students got a scholarship, which meant that most Libyan families had one. To get a scholarship was such a great opportunity. Before 2007, they were only given to specific people. You needed good contacts.[83]

Mansour acknowledges how 'Tomorrow's Libya' provided chances ('scholarship') without the necessity to rely on 'good contacts,' thus suggesting a gradual overcoming of the neo-patrimonialism presented in the previous chapter (See Chapter 6 Section 4). Change entails an equal access to social opportunities, reducing unnecessary participation in those revolutionary organizations, such as the RC, that often represented the only chances to realize fantasies of upward social mobility. This narrative, therefore, underlines how people's futurity of everyday life aspired to reduce the necessity to dissimulate belief – or act 'as if' - certain ideological rituals.

Hamza also stresses how the launch of 'Tomorrow's Libya' gradually rendered 'revolutionary' organizations obsolete or, more simply, unnecessary to pursue one's professional or personal career. Discussing the role of the RC, he explains:

> It's not my age, it's not in my time because - honestly - in 2006, when Saif al-Islam started his project of *Lībiyā al-Ghad*, all these roles were not so important anymore. Things started changing in Libya, no more need to join RC or strict dealing with

[81] Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*, p. 38.
[82] Ibid, p. 37.
[83] Author Interview, Mansour, 40 years old, Durham, September 2014.

> employees. […] It was the best time ever of the Qadhdhafi's regime…in 2006-2010…[84]

The narrative juxtaposes the arbitrariness and corruption of the past vis-à-vis the appearance of a more relaxing environment in the country, thus seemingly suggesting that the regime was providing what the people wanted. While Hamza remembers with a bit of nostalgia those years – from 2006 to 2010 - as 'the best time ever of the Qadhdhafi's regime,' another debate existed around the figure of Saif al-Islam, assessing why those clusters of promises and desires that many Libyans attached to him failed.

Some interviewees discuss the relationship between Saif and his father as a key factor that obstructed the realization of a successful program of reforms in Libya. They indicate the existence of an underlying conflict of power between Saif and his father, which manifested itself during the implementation of the reforms. For instance, Rabia illustrates that, while Saif's initiatives triggered small improvements in the everyday life, larger and structural problems – such as corruption and the role of the father - remained difficult issues to address:

> There was a slight improvement with Saif. He could not decide everything by himself but life improved and you could feel it. It would have taken a long time, since there was so much corruption and every decision had to go back to his dad.[85]

The central role occupied by the father and the underlying dynamics of legitimacy that sustained his power, such as corruption and patronage, impeded Saif from realizing his programs. Another interviewee, Abdullah, depicts the relationship between Saif and his father as purely instrumental:

> Saif was used by his father. He could not decide anything without his father. […] Saif tried to make his father change policies but he did not allow him. That's why Saif - probably - came to London. I remember some demonstrations taking place in some cities throughout Libya, demanding his return. But he was a tool, just a tool. To be honest, Qadhdhafi only accepted this program because he felt he had made many mistakes.[86]

[84] Author Interview, Hamza, 33 years old, Hull, March 2015.
[85] Author Interview, Rabia, 31 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.
[86] Author Interview, Abdullah, 42 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.

The findings demonstrate how the interviewees interpreted Saif's difficulties in carrying out a program of reform. According to them, those difficulties arose because the reforms did not coincide with the interests of Qadhdhafi and, more broadly, the regime. While Abdullah depicts Saif as 'a tool' in the hands of his father, he also stresses how people genuinely attached hopes and desires to his figure, as the protests demanding his return exemplify. Undoubtedly, underlying tensions and problems characterised Saif al-Islam's attempts to reform al-Jamāhīrīyah. For instance, when Saif leaked the draft of the constitution to the press in 2008, Qadhdhafi outrageously came out and stopped such a project. The son, in turn, announced his immediate withdrawal from the political arena.[87] In 2009, regime-owned media channels took over *al-Libiyya* channel, which was part of al-Ghad Media Group, during a live program that was criticizing the role of the RC in the country's affairs. In December 2010, Saif al-Islam released an official statement to announce that his foundation was going to abandon any human rights projects in Libya, and only focus on its 'core charitable missions.'[88]

In order to rehabilitate its international image and avoid the fate of Saddam Hussein's Iraq, al-Jamāhīrīyah needed to develop a more dynamic and friendly approach towards the international powers, yet without abandoning long-standing ideological pillars all-together. The regime, therefore, rebuilt a more credible and stable image of the country, particularly in the eyes of the United States, in order to attract much needed foreign investments in the degraded oil sector.[89] Saif's initiatives enabled the (re)functioning of the hydrocarbon industry, which pumped money into the regime's coffers. As soon as this goal was achieved, however, the regime started side-lining those less convenient reforms that Saif's program aimed to re-address, such as freedom of the press, human rights abuses or drafting of a constitution. Also, as mentioned above, the need to privatize and diversify the economy conflicted with Qadhdhafi's reluctance to let international and 'imperialist' lending organizations control Libya's economy.

The main problem of the reform programs was that Libya required to undergo both economic and institutional, thus political, reforms at the same time. The emergence of a functioning and less regulated economy could only foster with the abandonment of that system of patronage

[87] See Alison Parteger (2016) 'Libya: From Reform to Revolution' in: Yahia H. Zoubir & Gregory White (eds.) *North African Politics: Change and Continuity* (London: Routledge), p. 182.
[88] See Ian Black (2010) 'Gaddafi's son retreats on human rights in Libya' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2010/dec/16/gaddafi-son-human-rights-libya (access date: 12 May 2017).
[89] Parteger, Reform in Libya, p. 3.

and 'revolutionary' institutionalization that favoured a specific class of military-security officers. Consequently, such a process could affect the power of specific elites, particularly the so-called 'old guard,'[90] which seemed to be more attuned with another son of Qadhdhafi, Mutassim, leader of the armed forces. As Marwan explains, in fact, there was a struggle of power among the sons of Qadhdhafi:

> We didn't know what would happen if Qadhdhafi died, whether Saif or Mutassim would come to power, they had different visions for the country.[91]

The existence of such a conflict also appears in a 2009 US-Embassy cable, claiming that frictions were rising between Saif al-Islam and his brothers because the proposed economic program could hurt the economic interests of the 'old guard,' which instead wanted to secure its control of the most lucrative sectors in Libya.[92]

While these passages from the narratives illustrate the existence of conflictual dynamics within the Qadhdhafi family, which mirrored the tensions at work within the regime, others stress the existence of a 'familial' component whose essence explains the impossibility of realizing any reform in Libya. For instance, Mohammed talks about reforms as an empty discourse:

> We could not see any change on the ground. As Qadhdhafi used to give long, long speeches; so Saif al-Islam did about Tomorrow's Libya. They were just talking about their plans, people kept listening but nothing really happened.[93]

Mohammed suggests that the discourse of reformism acted as another instrument of control, which – as Beatrice Hibou argues - relies on two main discursive strategies: its endless perpetuation and incomplete character.[94] The regime endlessly promoted a discourse of reforms ('they were just talking') without really aiming to its full realization ('nothing really happened').

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[90] See Dirk Vandewalle (2009) *The Institutional Restraints of Reform in Libya: From Jamahiriyya to Constitutional Republic?* (Unpublished: Oxford Conference Paper), available online at: http://archive.libya-al-mostakbal.org/LM2009/Oct2009/051009_reform_in_libya.html (access date: 12 May 2017) and Parteger (2010) 'Reform in Libya: Chimera or Reality.'

[91] Author Interview, Marwan, 45 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
See Wikileaks (2009) 09TTRIPOLI208_a, available online at: https://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09TRIPOLI208_a.html (access date: 12 May2017).

[93] Author Interview, Mohammed, 36 years old, Reading, September 2015.

[94] Beatrice Hibou (2011) *The Force of Obedience: The Political Economy of Repression in Tunisia* (Cambridge: Polity Press), p. 204.

Other interviewees drew upon Libyan sayings to describe a 'mentality,' a tribal and blood-related continuity running through the Qadhdhafi family that doomed and invalidated any program of reforms:

> They had the same mentality. There is an English saying that goes: 'Like son, like father.' There is another - but stronger! - Libyan saying that goes: '*Ibn al-kāfir kāfir*!' meaning 'The son of a rat will continue digging.' You know the rats usually dig under the ground. Therefore, the son will be the same as his father."[95]

In this narrative, it is a 'tribal' continuity between father and son that impeded reform Libya. In addition, Musa's explanation of the saying '*Ibn al-kāfir kāfir*!' varies from its literal translation, which goes as 'The son of a blasphemer is blasphemous.' Similar to the joke comparing Qadhdhafi to Shayṭān, this saying might suggest an Islamic-derived criticism of the Qadhdhafi family, hinting to the lack of religious morale.

Another interviewee, Saddam, disregards the possibility that Saif al-Islam could improve the lives of people, explaining that Saif acted just like his father:

> Saif would have continued like his father, nothing at all would have changed with him. In Libya, we say '*Hādhā al-shibl min dhāka al-asad*' (A chip off the old block).[96]

While the findings presented in the first analytical chapter indicated the emergence of a disciplinary society passing from father to son, those narratives express the generational continuity of misconduct and abuse within the Qadhdhafi family. They associate them to 'rats' or 'lions' who loot the resources of the country and thus hinder the fulfilment of those quotidian aspirations and hopes of people. Lastly, the interviewees often recounted a popular joke that captures the underlying conflict between father and son, as well as the societal rejection of both:

> As Saif and his father start arguing over whom will rule the country, they decide to mask themselves, go into the streets and ask the people. While they are walking, they stop a man and ask him: 'Do you want Saif or Mu'ammar?' The man replies '*al-ithnayn lā*' (meaning: neither of them). Angered by such a response, both Saif

[95] Author Interview, Musa, 32 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[96] Author Interview, Saddam, 34 years old, Italy, August 2015.

> and his father take off their masks. The man, realizing to be in trouble, continues saying '*al-ithnayn lā, al-thalāthah lā* (not on Monday, not on Tuesday), *al-arb'a* (on Wednesday) I will be able to answer to this question.'[97]

The joke plays on the expression '*al-ithnayn lā*,' whose meaning in Arabic stands for both 'neither of them' and 'not on Monday.' As soon as the man realizes the real identity of his interlocutors, his answer continues in order to change the initial meaning. The joke not only exemplifies how people's rejected the rule of the Qadhdhafi family, but also the impossibility of expressing their opinions, forcing them to dissimulate or, at least, avoid any open confrontation.

This section demonstrated that the interviewees experienced the reformist agenda of Saif al-Islam in contradictory manners. While some interviewees illustrate how their everyday imaginations and hopes for the future emerged and closely interacted with the figure of Saif al-Islam, other interviewees recount a sense of predetermination and powerlessness over their lives, showing the continuity of abuse and misconduct of all the members of the Qadhdhafi family.

7.4 Conclusion

The chapter examined what everyday fantasies of happiness and desires reveal on the dynamics of power and resistance during al-Jamāhīrīyah. It explained how fantasies and hopes for the future function as contesting processes of the political status quo, thus interacting with broader dynamics of power (see Chapter 2 Section 4.3). The findings show that the interviewees' desires and aspirations toward a more consumerist and free-market economy was parallel to the persistent shortage or lack of goods between the 1980s and 1990s. While the regime-controlled economic programmes failed to deliver those goods that the population wanted, quotidian commodities – such as bananas and chewing gums – acquired a powerful symbolic meaning, whose specific discursive configurations captured hopes and desires for a different futurity demanding to replace scarcity with abundance of goods.

Since the early 2000s, the interviewees' clusters of promises and desires crystallized in the fantasy of turning Libya into Dubai. The findings illustrate that many interviewees considered

[97] Author Interview, Taha, 33 years old, Italy, August 2015.

the success story of Dubai as the 'future tense' of Libya, thus a model for modernization and development of the country that opposed the dominant discourse of the regime. Willing to re-approach the West, this fantasy captured popular discontent toward the regime and clashed with its anti-imperialist and Pan-African policies. Most importantly, it challenged the supremacy and power of the 'old-guard,' a group of security-military members turned merchant that controlled most of the country's resources. It entailed a popular desire for social services and remunerative jobs to cover the needs of a growing and young population. Also, the model of Dubai did not represent the realization of Western democracy, rather it insisted on a pattern of social relations that privileged paternal authority. The chapter showed, therefore, how the figure and policies of Saif al-Islam magnetized the interviewees' quotidian hopes and aspirations for a modern and developed Libya. The failure to reform the country, however, translated into further disillusionment among some interviewees. The nature of these findings revealed how the fantasy of Dubai represented a desire for a modernization that challenged that model of modernization led and controlled by the 'old guard,' which ultimately clashed with Saif al-Islam's projects and influenced his retire from the political arena.

Building on these three thematic chapters that shed light on the dynamics of power and resistance during al-Jamāhīrīyah, the next chapter assesses how the interviewees interpret the events that broke out in 2011.

8. The Revolution and the Everyday

This chapter examines how the interviewees' interpretations of the dynamics that led to the downfall of al-Jamāhīrīyah interact with its political anatomy of the everyday. The chapter tries to assess what aspects of the quotidian dynamics of power and resistance that characterized al-Jamāhīrīyah emerged in the ways the interviewees relayed the events of 2011. The discussion is divided into two subthemes. The first theme 'A Dividing Logic?' presents how the interviewees perceived the existence of two main and opposing discourses used to explain what happened in 2011. The second theme 'Mythologies of Violence and Powerlessness' identifies the common threads that each discourse upholds in interpreting 2011 as a moment of breakdown and collusion with past structures of power. The conclusion summarizes the main argument of the chapter and its contribution to the study.

8.1 A Dividing Logic?

Questions about the everyday life during al-Jamāhīrīyah often allowed the interviewees to reflect on the events of 2011. They tended to use such an opportunity to affirm the validity of their interpretation and thus convince the researcher (see Chapter 3 Section 4.2). However, it did not take long to realize the existence of two seemingly opposing and irreconcilable discourses. A collective conversation that took place in the last days of fieldwork in Italy exemplifies the determination of the interviewees to gain the researcher's support of their views. Being now acquainted with the various interpretations that they provided, they suddenly asked me to define 2011:

> You heard both stories, you spoke to most of us. According to you, what happened in Libya is a revolution or a civil war?[1]

The question captured the interviewees' desire to make me identify with one of the 'two sides.' To answer a 'revolution' meant backing up the 'revolutionaries' and dismissing the concerns of those who supported the regime, while the word 'civil war' only acknowledged the authority of Qadhdhafi and al-Jamāhīrīyah. My answer, therefore, tried to go beyond such a binary logic:

[1] Author Field Notes, Italy, August 2015.

> I think about my research as a very big pot of black, dirty water. When you try to put your hands in it, sometimes you can get a *jurdhān* (rat), sometimes you can find a *ṭaḥālib* (algae).[2]

Both question and answer revealed the difficulties of moving beyond the dichotomous and polarizing logic that I had heard from most of the interviewees when they reflected or explained the series of events that eventually led to the downfall of Qadhdhafi in 2011. The interviewees tended to divide the conflicting parties in two main groups, which they derogatively labelled as *ṭaḥālib* (algae) or *jurdhān* (rats). Each side used these terms to describe or stigmatize the other. Those supporting Qadhdhafi and al-Jamāhīrīyah used *jurdhān* (rats) to describe those people who allegedly aimed to overthrow the regime and destabilize Libya.[3] The interviewees illustrated how the word *jurdhān* functioned as a synonym for 'traitors,' who are believed to be dirty, destroy any place they get access to, and thus loot resources. Opposed to the term *jurdhān*, the rebels used the word *ṭaḥālib* (algae) to describe those who supported Qadhdhafi and al-Jamāhīrīyah regime. As the interviewees explained, algae are as green as the regime's supporters who go around waving the Green Flag (and The Green Book), and – most importantly – they cling uncomfortably to the skin, making them difficult to remove.[4] The significance of these two words lies in how they functioned as cultural markers, whose rhetorical use allowed drawing boundaries of political inclusion and exclusion.[5]

The dividing and contested nature of those events entailed questions of responsibility, breakdown and collusion with past structures of power, thus interacting directly with the political anatomy of the everyday during al-Jamāhīrīyah. For instance, when I asked Nazih to discuss his opinions regarding the future of the country, he replied:

> N: 'What football team do you support?'
>
> R: 'A.C. Milan, why?'
>
> N: 'I support Juventus. This is Libya now. You can't reason with supporters!'[6]

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[2] Ibid.
[3] Ibid.
[4] Ibid.
[5] See, for instance, Michael Herzfeld (1980) 'On the Ethnography of 'Prejudice' in an Exclusive Community' In: *Ethnic Groups*, 2, pp. 283-305; Phyllis Pease Chock (1987) 'The Irony of Stereotypes: Toward an Anthropology of Ethnicity' In: *Cultural Anthropology* 2:3, pp. 347-368; Keith Brown & Dimitrios Theodossopoulos (2007) 'Others' Others: Talking about Stereotypes and Construction of Otherness in Southeast Europe' In: *History and Anthropology* 15:1, pp. 1-22. The whole issue of *History and Anthropology* (15:1) contains a fruitful and important discussion on the uses, limits and functions of cultural markers as defining Self and Otherness.
[6] Author Interview, Nazih, 25 years old, Italy, August 2015.

Some interviewees perceived that each discourse offered uncompromising answers to those questions of responsibility and collusion with past structures of power. Like football supporters, each camp - *ṭaḥālib* or *jurdhān* – blamed the other for how the events unfolded.

Other interviewees explained the insistent reliance and support of those discourses as a cultural trait of Libyans, the combination of an inherent stubbornness and social pressure that some called *būnta* or 'blame culture.' As Nuri illustrated, *būnta* is not an Arabic word but was adopted from the Italian language (pronounced as *punta*), meaning 'point/tip.' In this context, *būnta* translates as 'pointing or finger-pointing insistently at someone' as a way to avoid taking responsibility. The interviewees provided different examples to describe *būnta*, such as:

> People in my town [Misrata] are supporting that militia not because they like them. They are just doing *būnta* against the other group. It is like revenge, it is politics; I guess it works like that all over the world.[7]

For Nuri, *būnta* is the result of violence ('revenge') and material interests ('politics'), which divide rather than reconcile people. Haitham instead stresses *būnta* as a constant trait of Libyans who never accept to take their own responsibility:

> Imagine someone who is walking, trips on a stone and falls on the ground. He would blame the stone, not himself who failed to see it. It is always someone else's fault. Libyans are like that, it is ingrained in the social texture of society.[8]

The powerfulness of this logic lies in how the interviewees rationalize and explain its functioning, accepting its strong dynamics of inclusion and exclusion that prevent further any chance of establishing a peaceful dialogue between them. In fact, as Mohammed indicates:

> If there is one thing, us Libyans are good at, is fighting. It is like preparing the dough for something. If you keep adding flour and water, you can go on and on![9]

These passages depict Libya as a divided country, separated in Manichean terms between two groups, *ṭaḥālib* and *jurdhān,* that tried to impose their rightful interpretation of the history that led to 2011 over each other. The next section moves to explore the specificities of those two

[7] Author Interview, Nuri, 46 years old, Hull, March 2015.
[8] Author Interview, Haitham, 42 years old, Reading, September 2015.
[9] Author Interview, Mohammed, 34 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.

discourses, gauging how their engagement with the political anatomy of the everyday during al-Jamāhīrīyah unveils problematic similarities rather than differences.

8.2 Mythologies of Violence and Powerlessness

When al-Jamāhīrīyah reached 2011, the withdrawal of Saif al-Islam from the political arena shattered those hopes of modernizing the country à la Dubai, further increasing the sense of popular alienation and disillusionment toward the regime. Therefore, when thousands of people in Tunisia and Egypt flooded into the streets asking their respective governments to resign, protests followed up in Libya on 17 February 2011 (see Chapter 4 Section 4). For the so-called *jurdhān*, the Revolution came as an historical necessity; it represented a cathartic moment that put an end to a corrupt and evil rule. For instance, Adel offers an Islamic-derived and mythological understanding of the events in 2011:

> I expected this Revolution because a change has to happen every forty years, as the Holy Qur'an shows with the story of the Prophet Musa. He reached Maydan only after forty years and then overthrew the Pharaoh.[10]

Adel relies on the story of the Prophet Musa (also known in the Bible as Moses) to explain the revolution as an historically predetermined event, thus a prophecy against Qadhdhafi. Like Musa, the revolution grows from within the house and structure of al-Jamāhīrīyah and ousts the corrupt rule of the Pharaoh, meaning Qadhdhafi. Around an approximate age of forty years old, the Prophet Musa left Egypt, the Pharaoh's kingdom, and reached the city of Maydan. While living in the desert, God revealed itself to Musa and asked him to travel back to Egypt and overthrow the Pharaoh. According to this analogy, the Libyan population's revolt against Qadhdhafi after forty-two years of his rule assumes a divine nature.

Other interviewees, like Mohammed, explain 2011 as a revolutionary movement emerging from the growing social grievances and frustrations over the lack of education and the malfunctioning of the health sector. The failure to reform the country, as detailed in Chapter 7, triggered a revolution:

[10] Author Interview, Adel, 37 years old, Durham, September 2014.

> The revolution started because people felt angrier and angrier. They could not access their rights. The hospitals were very bad. People needed to travel to Tunisia for treatment. The education system was bad, and it became even worse. Then, all those things Qadhdhafi used to say against America, it was just empty talk.[11]

Mohammed not only links the revolution to the failures of the regime to provide, but also stresses the contradictory nature of Qadhdhafi's anti-imperialist rhetoric, thus people's alienation from the regime's ideology. This latter point is crucial because it also helps to comprehend how some interviewees reacted to the words of their leader who accused the protesters of being agents of the West and wanting to destroy Libya:

> We deserve Libya, we will fight those rats and agents who are being paid by secret governments […] Do you want Americans to come and occupy you? Like Afghanistan, Pakistan and Iraq? Our country will become like Afghanistan, if that's what you want.[12]

Qadhdhafi's warning rhetoric only exasperated their frustrations and turned them even more toward the West, now considered more as a 'friend' than an enemy. This aspect is important because it explains how those who interpret the events of 2011 as a moment of resistance against al-Jamāhīrīyah envisioned the role of Western countries vis-à-vis the liberation of Libya. For instance, Anas interprets the NATO intervention as a means to attain the wishes and aspirations of the people:

> What will you do if someone says they are going to get what you want?[13]

Some interviewees considered the West as a strategic player that could allow them to accomplish 'what they wanted.' It is important to keep in mind that the goals of the Revolution not only entailed overthrowing Qadhdhafi but also turning Libya into Dubai (see Chapter 7 Section 2). When Saif al-Islam failed to fulfil such a dream, the interviewees' aspirations did not fade away. The fantasy of Dubai contained a desire to re-approach Western countries in a less confrontational manner and to break away from the anti-imperialist approach of Qadhdhafi. For these reasons, many interviewees aligned themselves optimistically with the military intervention. On the one hand, they saw it as a necessary tool in order to modernize and develop

[11] Author Interview, Mohammed, 28 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
[12] Mu'ammar Qadhdhafi (2011) Transcript of Speech on State TV, Tuesday, Feb 22, 2011, available online at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/10dy5oLJY2QL7k2VuwKonUpSgCUX-_9ATQ-134Xka9fs/edit?hl=en&pli=1 (access date: 10 January 2017).
[13] Author Interview, Anas, 38 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

their country. A military intervention, on the other hand, primed a fundamental necessity for the *thūwār* (revolutionaries). It required to identify a main obstacle to the materialization of the promise of freedom and the 'good life,' and thus get rid of all those affiliated with al-Jamāhīrīyah, the so-called loyalists (*azlam*) or *ṭaḥālib*.

For these reasons, Hussein explains that all those who wished the fall of Qadhdhafi's regime experienced the NATO intervention as a 'must':

> The foreign intervention was a must because we all knew that ordinary people could not make the Qadhdhafi regime fall. The NATO intervention, therefore, was a must, otherwise Qaddafi would have wiped Benghazi off the face of the Earth.[14]

While the interviewee refers to the humanitarian reasons that led the international community to intervene in Libya ('otherwise there would be no Benghazi on earth'), he also stresses the sense of powerlessness and lack of agency that many interviewees experienced vis-à-vis the power of Qadhdhafi ('we all knew that ordinary people could not make the Qadhdhafi regime fall'). This latter aspect is crucial because it frames the foreign intervention as not only a strategic manoeuvre, but also as the consequence of the rebels' powerlessness vis-à-vis the regime. Tareq, therefore, explains how the foreign intervention allowed the rebels to get rid of the *ṭaḥālib*:

> You will find a little number of people that will tell you that it was possible to oust Qadhdhafi without the intervention. We must recognize that Qadhdhafi was strong and he had many supporters, those *ṭaḥālib*. Without the West, we could not do it. People were ready to lose their lives, but – at the end – they would not succeed in doing it.[15]

Tareq describes the Western military intervention as a tool to obtain their goals and - most importantly - crush those *ṭaḥālib* that impeded the realization of their dreams. In other words, the oppression of the regime and its *ṭaḥālib* triggered the necessity for a foreign intervention, which appeared as the only viable and realistic option to undertake for the 'victims' ('those who could not oust Qadhdhafi'). By upholding 2011 as a moment to overthrow past structures of power, the '17 February Revolution' becomes a revolutionary moment that put Libya on the path toward freedom. The rebels' desire to regain their diminished sense of agency and to fulfil

[14] Author Interview, Hussein, 28 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[15] Author Interview, Tareq, 40 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.

their aspirations for improved economic conditions and a new 'father' with a modern vision for the country, required them to become advocates for the violent eradication of those external forces – Qadhdhafi and his *ṭaḥālib* - that impeded the realisation of their dreams.

However, when the fall of Qadhdhafi did not trigger a process of modernization and development, and the civil war escalated, some interviewees continued to explain such violence in the country as a mythological continuum of Qadhdhafi's legacy and his evil master plans. For instance, Shaykh Hussein suggests that the Revolution failed because Qadhdhafi planned the fragmentation of Libya:

> I didn't expect what happened in 2011 but Qadhdhafi worked for 40 years to get to this moment. Do you know what is happening now? He passed away four years ago. He did this, he wanted this. He was waiting for this moment, he said that 'If you finish me, you will see what happens.' So, this is what is happening.[16]

Al-Jamāhīrīyah fell, but the spiral of chaos and violence in Libya came because of Qadhdhafi's supernatural powers. By dividing and ruling the population through tribal alliances, these same dynamics are now destroying the country:

> He put these villages and tribes one against the other, because HE [emphasis] did this. He was clever, he was *Shayṭān* (Satan).[17]

The narrative depicts Qadhdhafi as a canny monster, a God-like figure, and evil as Satan, who attentively planned the disintegration of the social fabric of Libya along tribal lines, and thereby plunging the country into civil war. As shown in previous chapters, the comparison with Satan recurs in popular jokes (see Chapter 6 Section 2.2) and demonstrates how people continue to sustain the cult of personality of Qadhdhafi, despite his death. Another interviewee, Salah, offers a similar explanation, indicating how Qadhdhafi manipulated tribes and cities:

> People were kept in ignorance to make the system work. He [Qadhdhafi] was smart, he knew how to use and play the social texture of Libya […] he knew this would create problems between them. He did that![18]

The interviewees explain and comprehend the political and geographical fragmentation of Libya into militias and cities by blaming the 'other' and its strategies. Mukhtar also links the

[16] Author Interview, Shaykh Hussein, 50 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
[17] Author Interview, Hamza, 33 years old, Hull, March 2015.
[18] Author Interview, Salah, 27 years old, Italy, July 2015.

post-2011 quagmire to the evil master plan of Qadhdhafi and his *tahalib*, elucidating how the Libyan leader wrecked the country, once he realized that al-Jamāhīrīyah was going to collapse:

> Libya was destroyed by the Qadhdhafis and those *ṭaḥālib*, who played with the tribes and bought arms from Russia, which is why everybody has weapons now. Qadhdhafi, once he understood that he was going to die, he made the people go take the weapons. He knew what was going to happen.[19]

Independent of the substance of those narratives, be it tribal manoeuvrings or Russian arms, the act of blaming Qadhdhafi long after his death demonstrates how people continue to sustain those power relations that constituted their everyday life under al-Jamahiriyya. The interviewees often accused Qadhdhafi of 'corruption,' 'surveillance' and degradation of the country. Likewise, he remains accountable for the violence and infighting after 2011, despite his death. By indicating how both the military intervention and the civil war took place because of Qadhdhafi's power(s), all these interviews reveal a strong sense of powerlessness and victimization among the rebels, which negates their personal agency. While the rebels drown in the abyss of powerlessness, Qadhdhafi maintains – if not acquires more – power.

This point emerges most clearly in the narrative of Emad who holds Qadhdhafi accountable for a moral crime committed toward the entire population, which continues to haunt any future possibility of peace:

> Everybody criticized or mocked the way he looked or talked but the real problem was how he destroyed and corrupted the Libyan man. This was the most atrocious crime he committed: destroying our humanity. How do you think this is going to impact Libya now? It is sad, tragic![20]

Qadhdhafi's power lay in his ability to penetrate people's minds and behaviour, thus affecting how they now relate to one another. In so doing, Qadhdhafi left no chance for the uprising to succeed. Rather, the 'Revolution' unleashed what constituted the kernel of his rule and persona, which are infighting, moral corruption and violence. In other words, this discourse stresses a sense of powerlessness over the unfolding events, while simultaneously denying any personal involvement in the (re)production of power dynamics, thus negating the role of personal agency. This logic not only erases the complex and manifold ways people complied and (re)iterated

[19] Author Interview, Mukthar, 28 years old, Durham, May 2015.
[20] Author Interview, Emad, 33 years old, Hull, September 2015.

power in the everyday life, but also avoids mapping out the interdependent relationship between power/resistance.

The negation of agency displays the importance of dissimulation and political alienation in society. By becoming a tactic of survival that signalled a widespread sense of societal discontent toward the regime, dissimulation allowed for the (re)production of the dominant power structure that had transformed and come to reign until 2011. While its quotidian (re)production – together with corruption - functioned as means of survival, it also left the power structure unchallenged. The narratives instead kept holding Qadhdhafi accountable for the need of a foreign intervention, as well as for the subsequent failure of the uprising. In other words, Qadhdhafi remained the sole responsible agent for all societal failures, even after his own death, while the population is constituted as victim of his 'dirty tricks.' The sodomy of the leader during his capture (see Chapter 6 Section 1.2) as well as his *post mortem* deification, however, reveal the sustainment of those same practices that constituted the everyday life under al-Jamāhīrīyah. The '17th February Revolution' claimed to resist and fight the regime but its interpreters (re)produced those same dynamics by neglecting their own collusion with power. In this regard, the launch of the Political Isolation Law,[21] which banned from public office all those who had worked within regime-affiliated organizations, showed how the same dynamics of power are sustained. While this law aims to break from the past, it appears to be in perfect continuity with the logic of the civil war that marked 2011, as well as the discourse of fear and surveillance that al-Jamāhīrīyah had practiced for decades.

This discourse also contains a cruel[22] element, which lies in the fantasy of turning Libya into Dubai. Linking economic prosperity and modernization to better relations with Western countries, the idea of Dubai contributed to the popular demand of a Western/foreign-led military intervention. Many interviewees claimed that a foreign NATO-led military intervention not only was necessary to initiate the realisation of the fantasy of Dubai, but also the only realistic and viable strategy in light of Qadhdhafi's power. In the aftermath of the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah, however, the same interviewees now blamed the West and its neo-colonial interests toward Libya:

[21] Libyan General National Congress (2013) *Legislation No.13 of 2013 [on] Political and Administrative Isolation*, available at: http://muftah.org/full-text-libyas-political-isolation-law/#.WH91H9JviUk (access date: 18 January 2017).
[22] Laurent Berlant (2011) *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press).

> Don't talk to me about the Revolution. I was there, I fought and I lost two brothers. [Pausing] This is not a revolution, it's just a conspiracy against Libya. Look at the country now![23]

> I did the Revolution but now I understand. Qadhdhafi could have done much more with the money of Libya. The people who went into the streets did not want a war and they were not just Islamists, as other people told you. They wanted something better, but the West only wanted our gas, our reserves of oil and water.[24]

These interviews' passages capture the disappointing realization that what seemed to promise the 'good life' has turned Libya into a war-torn country. The West appears to pursue its own interest and has no genuine desire to help build Libya's future. For these reasons, Latif now affirms that:

> I understood what happened now. Rather than having Dubai in Libya, it is more possible that we will witness Dubai turning into Libya. As long as America is pleased.[25]

By blaming 'others' – from Qadhdhafi to the West, the interviewees continue to position themselves as the victims of an uncontrollable game of power, thus negating the role of their personal agency. They attached their hopes and desires to the fantasy of Dubai, which, in turn, played a fundamental role in driving them into the streets, as well as guiding the actions of the NTC, thus calling for a Western intervention. In so doing, they underestimated the array of neo-imperial interests that guided the policies of many countries toward Libya in 2011, from the West to the Gulf. The media discourse appeared to leave no other option for the NTC than 'mortgaging the Revolution'[26] to the West in order to prevent the massacre of Benghazi. Official documents, however, indicate how Western governments protected more their national interests than the faith of Libyans and their '17th February Revolution.' For instance, a 2016 UK House of Common governmental report states that the UK government's intervention in Libya was not informed by 'accurate intelligence,'[27] 'immediate threat to civilians was publicly

[23] Author Field Notes, Sheffield, September 2015.
[24] Author Interview, Reem, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[25] Author Field Notes, Nuri, 46 years old, Hull, January 2016.
[26] See Christopher M. Davidson (2017) 'Why Was Muammar Qaddafi Really Removed?' In: *Middle East* Policy 24(4), pp. 91–116.
[27] House of Commons Foreign Affairs Committee (2016) *Libya: Examination of intervention and collapse and the UK's future policy options*, available online at: https://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201617/cmselect/cmfaff/119/119.pdf (17 May 2017).

overstated,'[28] and there was 'exclusive focus on military intervention.'[29] It was not only Qadhdhafi who reproached the West in 2003 to maintain its authority and power, thus contradicting his anti-imperialist logic. Western countries also re-engaged with al-Jamāhīrīyah to pursue its own interests, i.e., oil and the 'War on Terror' (see Chapter 4 Section 4).

It is, therefore, important to acknowledge what role the West played in the unfolding of the events of 2011. However, the other discourse representing the camp of the *ṭaḥālib* narrowly focuses on the West as the main villain that prompted people to march into the streets. In doing so, this discourse also sustains and neglects crucial elements that characterized the political anatomy of the everyday prior to 2011. On 28 March 2011, the US President, Barack Obama, announced in a press conference that the world was facing a choice as a result of Qadhdhafi's merciless declarations:

> He compared them [his own people] to rats, and threatened to go door to door to inflict punishment […] We knew that if we wanted -- if we waited one more day, Benghazi, a city nearly the size of Charlotte, could suffer a massacre that would have reverberated across the region and stained the conscience of the world.[30]

Drawing on Qadhdhafi's verbal threats to rebel fighters in Benghazi, Obama described the reasons that led the UN – and many Western countries - to intervene in Libya. The UN showed its political commitment to 'end the worst forms of violence and persecution,'[31] including genocide and ethnic cleansing, thus preventing a coming massacre in the eastern city of Libya. This process led to the implementation of the international doctrine 'Responsibility to Protect' (R2P) through UNSCR 1973 that authorised UN member states to use 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians in Libya from pro-Qadhdhafi forces, excluding the possibility of sending in ground troops to occupy the country.[32]

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[28] Ibid.
[29] Ibid.
[30] The White House (2011) 'Remarks by the President in Address to the Nation on Libya,' available online at: https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/the-press-office/2011/03/28/remarks-president-address-nation-libya (access date: 10 January 2016).
[31] United Nations General Assembly (2005) A/RES/60/1, p. 30, available online at: http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/generalassembly/docs/globalcompact/A_RES_60_1.pdf (access date: 10 January 2016).
[32] United Nations Security Council (2011) Resolution 1973, adopted on 17 March 2011 and authorizing a 'no-fly zone' over Libya, available online at: http://www.nato.int/nato_static/assets/pdf/pdf_2011_03/20110927_110311-UNSCR-1973.pdf (access date: 15 August 2016).

Raouf suggests that political interests and the historical revenge of the West lay at the core of the 'humanitarian intervention.' To elucidate such an argument, he identifies an elaborate connection between the number of the UNSC Resolutions and the dates of major historical events that saw Qadhdhafi confronting the West and its interests:

> Do you know what the number of the UN Resolution that imposed a no-fly zone in Libya is? 19-73. 1973. Do you know what happened in Libya in 1973? Qadhdhafi got rid of the American military bases. What about the number of the resolution that was said to protect civilians? 19-70. In 1970 Qadhdhafi kicked out the English people.[33]

He carries on with such a numerical logic and provides a further example to demonstrate the careful and evil planning of the West against Libya, finding continuity between the invasion of Iraq and the intervention in Libya:

> Do you know when they [Western powers] invaded Iraq in 2003? On the 19th of March. Guess what? They invaded Libya on the 19th of March. On that same day. Numbers don't lie![34]

While a quasi-conspiratorial and mythological belief transpires from this narrative, Raouf's statements cohere with the dominant political discourse of the regime, which presented itself as a staunch opponent of the West's imperialist power.

Other interviewees explain that the regime only threatened those who were not willing to throw their weapons away,[35] as Ahmed recounts:

> In Benghazi, a group of 'non-violent' people – those *thūwār* [revolutionaries], as they call themselves – tried to capture a police barrack, which was full of weapons and artilleries. What would your government do? Wouldn't they shoot them and try to stop them?[36]

[33] Author Interview, Raouf, 29 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[34] Ibid.
[35] Qadhdhafi "promised amnesty for those 'who throw their weapons away' but 'no mercy or compassion' for those who fight." See David D. Kirkpatrick and Kareem Fahim (2011) 'Qaddafi Warns of Assault on Benghazi as U.N. Vote Nears,' In: *New York Times*, available online at: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/03/18/world/africa/18libya.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (access date: 10 January 2016).
[36] Author Interview, Ahmed, 28 years old, Italy, August 2015.

He explains that there were no grounds for an imminent massacre because, when a group of civilians aimed to take control of a weaponry deposit, al-Jamāhīrīyah only tried to stop them. The regime's response, therefore, aligned with what any other government would have done. The interviewees indicate that the 'humanitarian' grounds that moved the international community to intervene were fabricated. The media, in general, and the Qatari-based channel 'al-Jazeera,' in particular, helped to manufacture the imminent threat of a massacre in Benghazi.[37] Muftah, for example, says:

> What massacre in the city of Benghazi? Look, did Qadhdhafi massacre any other town before arriving to Benghazi? The story about the massacre does not make sense. It was al-Jazeera that created these lies.[38]

Muftah stresses how foreign powers manipulated the nature of the 2011 events through media coverage aligned with the national and foreign policy interests of their home countries.[39] Western powers and Gulf States, as the reference to al-Jazeera makes clear, took advantage of such a situation in order settle their political problems with al-Jamāhīrīyah by getting rid of Qadhdhafi. As Karim explains, the media campaign valued certain words of Qadhdhafi, but ignored other messages:

> Qadhdhafi spoke on the radio,[40] saying: 'Just throw the weapons, even in the street. Throw them. We will take care of them but throw the weapons. You, my sons, go

[37] The story around the massacre of Benghazi and the imminent bloodshed that the regime forces were going to carry out remained a much-contested narrative mainly fought at the level of media and television news. Se, Maximilian Forte (2011) 'The Top Ten Myths in the War Against Libya,' In: *Counterpunch*, available online at: http://www.counterpunch.org/2011/08/31/the-top-ten-myths-in-the-war-against-libya/ (access date: 16 May 2016); and David Bosco (2011) 'Was there going to be a Benghazi massacre?,' In: *Foreign Affairs*, available online at: http://foreignpolicy.com/2011/04/07/was-there-going-to-be-a-benghazi-massacre/ (access date: 16 May 2016).

[38] Author Interview, Muftah, 34 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.

[39] Looking at the case of the UK and Qatar, Al Nahed also argues that media coverage of the Libya uprising was highly influenced by their political agendas. See Sumaya Al Nahed (2015) 'Covering Libya: A Framing Analysis of Al Jazeera and BBC Coverage of the 2011 Libyan Uprising and NATO Intervention' in: *Middle East Critique* 24:3, pp. 251-267. For an interesting discussion on the media representation of the 'rebels' in the initial stages of the conflict, see Susannah O'Sullivan (2014) *Libya and the production of violence: space, time and subjectivity in contemporary humanitarian intervention* (Unpublished PhD: University of Manchester).

[40] In this radio message, Qadhdhafi addresses the Libyan population and those who came into the streets to demonstrate against the regime. Karim refers to a passage starting around 8:40 until 11:00 minutes. See YouTube (2013) 'Khiṭāb al-qā'id mu'ammar al-qadhdhāfī ilá ahālī banghāzī 'abra al-rādyū – kāmil' [The radio speech of leader mu'ammar qadhdhafi to the people of benghazi – full version], available online at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lFPBd8BZz1M&spfreload=10 (access date: 10 February 2016).

> back home, I don't want you to die. Did you understand?' The West did not want to hear this message.[41]

Karim proposes that the media contributed actively to support the political interests of Western and Gulf countries, thus questioning the legitimacy of those 'moral concerns' upheld in Obama's speech and the UNSC Resolutions.

Other interviewees discuss those same dynamics in a blunter and more colourful language. Latif, for example, starts from the figure of Mohammed Bouazizi, the Tunisian street vendor who set himself on fire and sparked the 'Arab Spring':

> You know Mohamed Bouazizi,[42] right? Well, he is a big piece of shit.[43]

Latif continues questioning the whole political significance of those protests that shook off years of authoritarian resilience in the region, defining them as 'bullshit' and a Western-led manipulating strategy to bring down the whole Arab region:

> They needed to bring down Tunisia and Egypt to get control of Libya, of its oil and gas. This is what they really wanted, and they mobilized its population by telling lies. This is what Al-Jazeera did. They were all lies. Lies, lies, lies![44]

Latif explains that the popular uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt were strictly connected to the events in Libya, since the downfall of al-Jamāhīrīyah represented the ultimate goal of Western powers and Arab Gulf states. He proposes that these states fabricated a media campaign in order to induce popular revolts in the whole region, while pursuing their 'real' interests: controlling Libya's resources of oil and gas.

While the findings show that some interviewees hold the West and Arab Gulf states responsible as the main agents their country's destruction, another important aspect also emerges. The narratives also describe the so-called *thūwār* as belonging to the (in)famous category of 'enemies of the revolution,' as presented in Chapter 5. In the late 1980s, being under increasing international and domestic pressure, the regime launched a violent attack on all those people

[41] Author Field Notes, Karim, 28 years old, Italy, July 2015.
[42] For a detailed story of the Mohammed Bouazizi, see Kareem Fahim (2011) 'Slap to a Man's Pride Set Off Tumult in Tunisia' In: *New York Times* available at: http://www.nytimes.com/2011/01/22/world/africa/22sidi.html?_r=2&pagewanted=2&src=twrhp (access date: 19 January 2016).
[43] Author Interview, Latif, Italy, 7 July 2015.
[44] Ibid.

who allegedly were trying to destabilize the country, labelling them as being a 'fifth column,' 'stray dogs,' *zanādiqah* or 'collaborators of the West.' Anas, for instance, draws on such a discourse to highlight how the close alliance between foreign powers and '*jurdhān'* brought the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah in 2011:

> There is also a military term to explain what happened in Libya. It's called 'fifth column,' which means that there was a group of people in the country working in favour of the enemy […] these were the *jurdhān* in Libya, people who belonged to al-Qaeda, the Islamists. They are traitors and they will always be because they have it in their blood.[45]

Anas not only provides a military explanation for the nature of the events in 2011 but also draws on these categories to reinforce the close alliance between the West and the rebels, equating the latter to those groups of Islamists that al-Jamāhīrīyah and the West were trying to fight collaboratively. Also, the reference to 'they have it in their blood' functions as a strong cultural marker aimed at strengthening the irreconcilable differences between *taḥālib* and *jurdhān* 'us and them.' This logic, however, does not consider how the population associated al-Jamāhīrīyah's anti-imperialist discourse with a tool used to maintain and generate an atmosphere of violence, fear and suspicion in the everyday life of people. As shown in Chapter 5, since the early 1980s, the regime began to equate criticism and opposition to al-Jamāhīrīyah's policies with 'collaboration with imperialist forces,' thus leaving almost no room for the population to voice dissent and becoming increasingly authoritarian (see Chapter 5 Section 2). To identify the Islamists as the main collaborators of the West that aimed to overthrow the regime meant (re)producing a political mantra that had alienated the population.

The labelling of the rebels as agents of the West dismisses the social grievances of the population and sustains the logic of the regime, presenting instead 2011 as a 'sell-off' of the country.

> "They were exiled, now they are back, and they want to rule the country. Those *thūwār* sold their country to the West. I [emphasis] will always stand with Libya."[46]

The interviewee interprets 2011 as a cathartic moment for the country, where the revolutionaries sold Libya for their own personal interests, while lacking any sense of patriotism or natiHe

[45] Author Interview, Anas, 25 years old, Italy, August 2015.
[46] Author Interview, Hamid, 32 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.

remarks on the lacks of a sense of belonging and kinship among the *jurdhān* vis-à-vis the *ṭaḥālib*, juxtaposing the 'exiled' and almost foreign nature of those political opponents who joined the rebels to 'I will always stand for Libya.' Also, Hamid holds Saif al-Islam accountable for allowing those who were in exile to come back in the country:

> Those people betrayed him. They are *jurdhān* and they have it in their blood. Now they are controlling Libya.[47]

This viewpoint is important in how it denies the internal power struggle that characterised the rise of Saif al-Islam in the political arena. Since the late 1980s, the launch of economic programs aiming at liberalizing the economy signalled a desertion of the regime's egalitarian and socialist values, resulting in the appearance of social inequalities and widespread corruption. Those processes were amplified with the imposition of the international sanctions in the 1990s and the rise to power of high military-security officers (see Chapter 4 Section 3). In such a context, where only a group of high military officers controlled the majority of the country's resources, the interpretation of 2011 as an imperialist plot denies the existence of an internal struggle for power between two groups ('old-guard' and 'reformists') bearing a different vision for the country's future and how it affected the protests. The rise of the reformist camp, guided by Qadhdhafi's son Saif al-Islam, not only challenged the hegemony of the military-security apparatus of the 'old guard,' but also raised significant hopes of change and modernization among the population. Many of those who had supported Saif al-Islam's projects, i.e., Ali Issawi or Mustapha Abdul Jalil,[48] quickly defected to the rebel side in the early stages of the conflict.

Overall, the interpretation of 2011 as an imperialist plot denies the regime's rolein the formation of structural grievances and popular discontent, and it fails to assess the great level of political alienation that existed within society. Many interviewees experienced the anti-imperialist discourse as a façade, a contradictory political posture used only to reinforce the cult of Qadhdhafi's personality, and they only kept obeying those ideological rituals in order to pursue their careers and obtain personal gains. Moreover, the renunciation to the WMD programme in 2003 and the subsequent collaboration with Western countries in the fight against terrorism proved further to the population the double standards of al-Jamāhīrīyah's anti-imperialist rhetoric, which instead clashed with the popular memory of economic isolation and social

[47] Ibid.
[48] David Gritten (2011) 'Key figures in Libya's rebel council' In: *BBC News*, available online at: http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-12698562 (access date: 14 February 2017).

suffering during the period Libya was under international sanctions. A similar dynamic relates to those interviewees who pointed to the existence of an underlying conflict of interests between Libya and the West over the role of the IMF (see Chapter 7 Section 2), as well as al-Jamāhīrīyah's expanding role in the African continent. Their arguments do not consider how the regime's ruling elite also belonged to the global financial class,[49] had long abandoned socialist ideals and embraced consumerist and corrupted practices.

Consequently, al-Fatḥ reached 2011 in a state of crisis and lacking widespread legitimacy, having ceased to support – rather contradicted - those values and policies that had marked its rise to power in 1969. Its insistence to rely on its anti-imperialist discourse to frame the protests of 2011 only exasperated those who sat on the other side of the spectrum, the 'revolutionaries,' whose logic is, nonetheless, problematic. In 2011, Libya moved from one revolution (al-Fatḥ) to the other (1 February) through two discourses that not only identified main villains, but also proposed to achieve freedom through the heroic annihilation of one another. They trace responsibility for the lack of freedom or overthrow of past structures of power in the figure of a singular evildoer. In so doing, they reduce questions of personal agency and collusion with previous power practices into a grand-narrative – at times, mythological - of complete powerlessness, whose main consequence is the obliteration of violence as a means to overcome the situation.

8.3 Conclusion

The chapter examined the interviewees' interpretations of the 2011 events. It showed how they perceived the existence of two opposing discourses that divided the population into *ṭaḥālib* (algae) and *jurdhān* (rats), thus pro- and anti- regime supporters. While the interviewees used the Manichean explanation for the ongoing instability of the country in the aftermath of the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah, the chapter also demonstrated how each discourse problematically engaged with the political anatomy of the everyday. By addressing questions of responsibility, breakdown and collusion with past structures of power, the main investment of those discourses

[49] See Hannes Munzinger and Frederik Obermaier (n.d.) 'Lost Treasure,' In: *Panama Papers: The Secrets of Dirty Money*, available online at: http://panamapapers.sueddeutsche.de/articles/573aeac75632a39742ed39a0/ (access date: 14 November 2017); Juliette Garside, Mona Mahmood and David Pegg (2016) 'Gaddafi insider accused of using state cash to buy luxury Scottish hotels' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/may/16/gaddafi-insider-accused-of-using-state-cash-to-buy-luxury-scottish-hotels (access date: 14 November 2017).

is to locate the source of oppression in moral and monological terms. While some interviewees assigned Qadhdhafi and his *ṭaḥālib* the main responsibility, others interpreted 2011 as an imperialist aggression against Libya, led by Western powers and backed by Gulf States in collaboration with the 'enemies of the revolution.' Both discourses negate the role of agency of other than the top elites, be it Libyan or foreign ones, thus denying any personal involvement in or collusion with past structures of power. This sense of powerlessness and victimization is unable to acknowledge how power is interwoven into the everyday practices that characterised al-Jamāhīrīyah in the present. Instead, it covers up how people are enacting those same dynamics over themselves, despite the death of Qadhdhafi and the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah. In doing so, it rationalises and justifies the use of violence and war, impeding further the possibility for a peaceful future.

9. Conclusion

At the root of this research project was the question of how power is complied, negotiated, (re)produced and contested in the everyday life. This research has provided empirical and theoretical insights illustrating the nuanced political nature of people's mundane exchanges, interactions and emotions during the Libyan Arab al-Jamāhīrīyah from 1977 to 2011. Conceptualising power and resistance as dialogical and socio-cultural processes, this study has thus shown their mutual entanglement and subtle enmeshment. Understanding how people contest and negotiate power requires comprehending the ways in which structures of control operate at the level of the everyday and the various effects they have, i.e. subjugation, discipline, dissimulation and/or alienation. By navigating the quotidian, this study examined the theoretical and empirical relevance of how power functions at the structural level. It emphasised, however, how people experienced, practiced and shaped power in their everyday life.

This inquiry emerged in relation to an identified research gap in the literature on the political history of al-Jamāhīrīyah. The perusal of the literature revealed a narrative of Libya that emphasised the notion of 'statelessness,' thus a country without a functioning state. This lack was supplemented instead by the role, speeches and ideas of Qadhdhafi. In other words, the problematic aspects of this approach lay in its tendency to reduce the question of power and political authority to the figure of one-man, while disregarding what role people played in shaping and negotiating power. While this approach has continued to influence academic analyses of Libyan politics in the aftermath of the 2011 fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah, some scholarly works moved away, adopting socio-political lenses that considered how people interacted with power. Building on those latter studies works, this dissertation contributes further by utilizing research methodology that privileges an in-depth exploration of the subjective experience of people: oral histories/narratives.

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to evaluate the findings and its theoretical implications across the fields of political sociology, political anthropology, critical theory, area studies, as well as policy-making. The first section summarises the findings in light of the main question and aims outlined in the introductory chapter. The second section discusses how this study contributes to those academic works focusing on the broader study of the dynamics of power and resistance and, in particular, in relation to the MENA region. It explored the everyday

matters not only to theorising power, but also to comprehending the significance of revolutionary events, such as the 'Arab Spring.' The closing section offers a brief discussion of the limitations of this study and draws out those avenues of possible future research that this study has opened up.

9.1 Research Findings

In raising the question of how power is practiced, manoeuvred and complied with in the everyday, this study examined the narratives of 66 interviewees who recounted their quotidian experiences living in al-Jamāhīrīyah over an historical period that spanned from 1977 to 2011. Four main and intimately connected themes emerged from those narratives and highlight the nuanced political anatomy of the everyday: people's quotidian experience of violence, fear and surveillance; the ambiguous nature of everyday actions in negotiating and (re)producing power; people's mundane hopes and aspirations for the future and lastly, the relationship between the revolution and the everyday.

The research on the political anatomy of the everyday in Libya outlined how, after the establishment of al-Jamāhīrīyah in 1977, people often experienced the power of political authorities as an external and coercive structure that relied on the display of public violence, such as public hangings and televised trials. The regime used violence to fend off those people who allegedly were trying to challenge its supremacy and thus draw the boundaries of what I call 'the parameters of the permissible.' The conceptual insights of Michel Foucault helped to explain how the waves of violence and coercive measures planted the seeds for the gradual emergence of a disciplinary society, where fear expanded from the public to the private sphere and was transmitted through generations. Fear became an intrusive and dominant aspect of the everyday, and people felt observed and watched constantly. Following Sara Ahmed's conceptualization of fear, the study also showed how fear inclined people to regard each other in a suspicious manner, re-enforcing the regime's control over the population, while clouding possibilities to distinguish between 'real' and 'imagined' threats and dangers.

Those mechanisms were exacerbated in the 1990s, when the armed mobilization of Islamist groups against the regime additionally contributed to the difficulties that al-Jamāhīrīyah encountered at the international level, particularly with the imposition of international sanctions. Threatened and confronted by the West, the regime tended to equate internal threats

as Western-sponsored attempts to overthrow the 'revolutionary legitimacy' of al-Fatḥ. During this period, surveillance complemented the public display of violence, turning people into objects of observation and categorization, such as 'enemies of the revolution', in order to prevent, anticipate and thus to control their conduct. The interviews revealed how people internalised the repressive state practices and even started to watch over and to report on each other. While al-Jamāhīrīyah became increasingly oppressive and authoritarian, people also participated in the (re)production of surveillance and oppression. In their attempts to manoeuvre the regime's surveillance over their lives, they only ended up (re)producing its functioning

However, the dissertation also outlined the dynamic and ambiguous nature of quotidian interactions of people with the structures and symbols of al-Jamāhīrīyah itself. It found that dissimulation and political alienation were common forms of interaction among the population. The conceptual insights of Achille Mbembe, Slavoj Zizek and James C. Scott helped to explain how dissimulation allowed people to keep their thoughts private, escape the disciplinary control of the regime, and get by in their everyday lives. Dissimulation provided necessary space to manoeuvre and to play safe with the 'public transcripts of power'[1] thus avoiding an open confrontation with the regime. For al-Jamāhīrīyah, however, the public participation with and performance of its imposed measures signalled the people's adherence to and reiteration of an officially sanctioned vision of life. While resisting the official script in the personal lives, the widespread use of humour and jokes,[2] as well as cynicism,[3] in the end, helped to (re)produce the conditions of obedience and enabled al-Jamāhīrīyah to remain in power.

This was especially visible with respect to the cult of Qadhdhafi's persona, as Qadhafi was as much admired and revered as he was simultaneously mocked and criticized. Everyday interactions with 'The Green Book' or the 'Revolutionary Committees' displayed a similar dynamic, as peoples' participation in ritualistic state performances took place under the condition of disbelief, fear and necessity. Pervading the social fabric of Libya, the lack of genuine support often characterised people's relationship with the regime, yet it also pointed out the forces at work that motivated the interviewees to dissimulate, and to focus on their personal interests, such as the acquisition of money and power while seeking protection. The rather ambiguous interaction between power and resistance also characterised widespread

[1] James C. Scott (1990) *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (London: Yale University Press).
[2] Achille Mbembe (2001) *On the Postcolony* (Berkley: University of California Press).
[3] Slavoj Žižek (1987) *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso).

corruption, among it the economy of bribes, and the utilisation of personal and tribal connections for personal gains. These forms of corruption were vital to the continuation of al-Jamāhīrīyah, while they simultaneously challenged its stability. People condemned and mocked corruption within the regime, but they also replicated it in their everyday lives, stealing money from the government or trying to pursue their professional careers by using the 'right connections.' In doing so, the political anatomy of the everyday constantly shifted between (re)iterating the power of the regime and trying to manoeuvre its mechanisms. These manoeuvres, however, supported the (re)production of hierarchies that allowed the regime to maintain its authority, and it allowed the regime to remain in power without being challenged. These practices nonetheless increasingly eroded the regime's legitimacy and continued to alienate the population from the regime and from its official symbols.

The dissertation additionally revealed how everyday aspirations and desires shaped and interacted with dominant formations of power. Drawing on Sara Ahmed's work about the cultural politics of emotions, the study outlined the hopes that are aligned to the political, and how they help to negotiate and contribute to the dynamics of domination. The study found that a popular desire for a consumerist and free-market economy insistently emerged when the regime-controlled economic programmes failed to deliver desired and wanted goods. Commodities, such as bananas and chewing gum, acquired enormous political significance, carrying with them the symbols for and revealing a general desire for change and modernization. Those desires peaked in the recurring fantasy of turning Libya into Dubai, which appeared as a role model for (fast) modernization and development. This fantasy not only clashed with the anti-imperialist and Pan-African stance of the regime, but also challenged the supremacy and power of the 'old-guard,' a group of security-military members that controlled most of the country's resources and symbolized the gradual abandoning of the socialist ideals that had characterised al-Fatḥ Revolution. Therefore, when Qadhdhafi's son, Saif al-Islam, seemed to magnetize those everyday hopes and aspirations, an internal struggle for power unfolded that ultimately led to the failure of reform in the country, creating further disillusionment among the population. The study argued that hopes and promises of future happiness contain a certain double-ness: they function as regulatory mechanisms used to control and orient the population toward the regime but also arise because of the failures and pitfalls of power to deliver what it promises.

The examination of the relationship between forces at work that characterised the political anatomy of al-Jamāhīrīyah vis-à-vis the population focussed on the interpretation of the 2011

events, which eventually led to the fall of al-Jamāhīrīyah. It showed how Libyans rationalized two main and exclusionary narratives of revolutionaries versus pro-regime stalwarts to explain the breakdown of power. Both discourses uphold a vision of power that denies agency, and thus missed the quotidian participation in the (re)production of those structural aspects that characterised al-Jamāhīrīyah and that either were rationalised as major grievances or as quotidian aspirations for the 'good life'. Both discourses neglected the political anatomy of the everyday during al-Jamāhīrīyah and instead externalized responsibility onto the body of an evil Other, be it 'Qadhdhafi or the West.' In doing so, they both share a pervasive – at times, mythological - sense of powerlessness and victimization that, while helping to rationalise the violence and fear of the present, inevitably denies Libya the space to build a more peaceful future. Both also align with major academic explanations of the 2011 conflict, which either look for domestic causes, such as the historical 'stateless' trajectory of Libya, or international causes, which focus exclusively on the role of foreign and Western actors in overthrowing Qadhdhafi.

9.2 Why the Everyday: State, Revolution and Policy-Making

By examining the quotidian interactions, exchanges and emotions of people, this study has shown that the everyday is crucial for a comprehensive understanding of power, resistance and thus more broadly of politics. It allows one to move beyond the focus on formal institutions, prominently among them the state, since this is a view that reduces the political to formal forms of authority. Demonstrating the problematic aspects of the pervasive theories of 'statelessness' or 'failed' states[4] in relation to Libya (see Chapter 2 Section 1), this study has argued that it is necessary to study the role of everyday practice[5] to comprehend how power functions and works, as well as how people participate in its (re)production and contestation.[6] Conceptually, this study aligns with those academic works that envision the state as an effect of practices. However, its focus did not stress the role of state practices, such as mappings, bureaucracies, statistics, [7] but everyday practices and the fantasies of people that guide their actions and

[4] Charles T. Call (2008) 'The Fallacy of the Failed State,' *Third World Quarterly*, 29 (8), pp. 1491-1507.
[5] Pierre Bourdieu (1992) *The Logic of Practice* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press); Ben Highmore (2002) *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (New York: Routledge Press), pp. 115-160 and (2011) *Ordinary Lives: Studies in the Everyday* (New York: Routledge Press), pp. 3-6; Joe Moran (2005) *Reading the Everyday* (London, UK: Routledge).
[6] Michel de Certeau (1984) *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkley: University of California Press)*;* Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance.*
[7] Timothy Mitchell (1991) 'The Limits of the State: Beyond Statist Approaches and Their Critics,' *The American Political Science Review*, 85 (1), pp. 77-96; Timothy Mitchell (2006 Society, Economy and the State Effect. In:

desires.[8] The analyses demonstrated that rules, regulations and norms exist beyond individual actions, yet people constantly shape and negotiate their meanings, and thus they ultimately participate to the creation of structures and institutions. Therefore, the state as a structure works as long as people are able to imagine its existence in their everyday lives. At the same time, people make a strategic use of its rules and norms, trying to condition or modify them.

For these reasons, the findings in this study contribute to those academic works that analyse the multiple dynamics of power and resistance via the practice of everyday life within and beyond the MENA region.[9] Pointing out the disciplinary role that violence and surveillance play in the (re)production and maintenance of power dynamics[10] helps to shed light on how authoritarian forms of political rule work.[11] This not only contributes to a larger debate on the expanding uses of state violence and surveillance,[12] but also to a better understanding of their social effects and repercussions, such as the rise of suspicion and conspiracy-related theories. The investigation of people's quotidian interactions with officially sanctioned ideological symbols and structures captures the importance to consider both performances and phantasies as everyday practices.[13] The ambiguous nature of the everyday life aligns with those theoretical

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Akhil Gupta & Aradhana Sharma (eds.) *The Anthropology of the State: a Reader*, pp. 169-186 (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing); Thomas Biebricher (2013) Critical Theories of the State: Governmentality and the Strategic-Relational Approach, *Constellations* 20(3), pp. 388-405.

[8] Wendy Brown (1995) *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), p. 174; Veena Das & Deborah Poole (2004) 'State and its Margins: Comparative Ethnographies,' in: Veena Das & Deborah Poole (eds.) *Anthropology in the Margins of the State*, pp. 3-34 (Santa Fe, NM: School of American Research Press).

[9] See Lisa Wedeen (1999) *Ambiguities of Domination: Politics, Rhetoric, and Symbols in Contemporary Syria* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press); Saba Mahmood (2011) *The Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Asef Bayat (2010) *Life as Politics: How Ordinary People Change the Middle East* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press); Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) *Faces of the State: Secularism and Public Life in Turkey* (Princeton: Princeton University Press); Salwa Ismail (2006) *Political Life in Cairo's New Quarters: Encountering the Everyday State* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press); Charles Tripp (2014) *The Power and the People: Paths of Resistance in the Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); John Chalcraft (2016) *Popular Politics in the Making of the Modern Middle East* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press).

[10] Michel Foucault (1993) *Sorvegliare e punire: nascita della prigione* [Discipline and punish: the birth of the prison] (Torino: Einaudi).

[11] Laleh Khalili and Jillian Schwedler (eds.) (2010) *Policing and Prisons in the Middle East: Formations of Coercion* (London: Hurst); Ilana Feldman (2015) *Police Encounters: Security and Surveillance in Gaza under Egyptian Rule* (Stanford: Stanford University Press)*;* Elia Zureik, David Lyon and Yasmeen Abu-Laban (eds.) (2013) *Surveillance and Control in Israel/Palestine* (London: Routledge); Nadera Shalhoub-Kevorkian (2015) *Security Theology, Surveillance and the Politics of Fear* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press); Dina Rezk (2017) *The Arab World and Western Intelligence: Analysing the Middle East: 1956-1981* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press).

[12] Veena Das (2007) *Life and Words: Violence and the Descent into the Ordinary* (Berkeley: University of California Press); David Lyon (2009) 'Surveillance, power, and everyday life' In: Chrisanthi Avgerou, Robin Mansell, Danny Quah, and Roger Silverstone (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Information and Communication Technologies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press).

[13] See also Yael Navaro-Yashin (2012) *The Make-Believe Space: Affective Geography in a Post-War Polity* (Durham: Duke University Press)

and empirical works on the iterability of norms and their resignification.[14] For instance, it resembles closely what Alexei Yurchak calls 'hegemony of form' in the Soviet Union,[15] where "to reproduce the precise form (*how*) of ideological representations than to adhere to their meanings (*what*)"[16] became a fundamental condition for the maintenance of state power. Ritualized repetitions of norms solidify power but also can offer potentialities and possibilities for their re-signification. While the study did not over-emphasise the 'resistant' character of people's actions,[17] it also stressed the necessity to explore the political significance of contested spaces and sites, such as humour,[18] rumours and illicit economies.[19] Their analyses permit grasping more closely the meanings of the political and illuminates how systems of control compete with each other, evolving and developing in a dialogical process.[20]

In addition, the study makes an important contribution in exploring the affective component of power, [21] focusing on what everyday emotions, desires[22] and hopes reveal about the stability and legitimacy of state policies and how people interact vis-à-vis them. The power of the state is connected intimately to the ways people dream about their lives and aspire for a different future. To study those dynamics means being able to detect the existence of precariousness, uncertainty and discontent that, on the one hand, governs people's lives. On the other hand, these realities represent those forces at work that often guide popular contestation, political

[14] Judith Butler (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge) and (1993) *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of 'Sex'* (New York: Routledge).
[15] Yurchak (2003) 'Soviet Hegemony of Form: Everything Was Forever Until It Was No More,' In: *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 45:3, pp. 480-510.
[16] Alexei Yurchak (2005) *Everything Was Forever, Until It Was No More: The Last Soviet Generation* (Princeton: University of Princeton Press), p. 37.
[17] See Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) 'The Romance of Resistance: Tracing Transformations of Power through Bedouin Women,' In: *American Ethnologist* 17:1, pp. 41-55 and Pierre Bourdieu (1998). *Acts of Resistance: Against the New Myths of Our Time* (Cambridge: Polity Press)
[18] Alexei Yurchak (1997) 'The Cynical Reason of Late Socialism: Power, Pretense, and the *Anekdot*' In: *Public Culture* 9, pp. 161-188; Michael Billig (2005) *Laughter and Ridicule: Toward a Social Critique of Humour* (London: Sage), pp. 211-214; Villy Tsakona and Diana Elena Popa (eds.) (2011) *Studies in Political Humour* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins B.V.).
[19] See Jonathan Shapiro Anjaria (2011) 'Ordinary States: Everyday Corruption and the Politics of Space in Mumbai' In: *American Ethnologist* 38:1, pp. 58-72; Donatella della Porta & Alberto Vannucci (2012) *The Hidden Order of Corruption: An Institutional Approach* (London: Routledge); Ramady (ed.) *The Political Economy of Wasta*; Martyn Egan & Paul Tabar (2016) 'Bourdieu in Beirut: *Wasta*, the State and Social Reproduction in Lebanon' In: *Middle East Critique* 25:3, pp. 249-270; Nicky Gregson & Mike Crang (2017) 'Illicit economies: customary illegality, moral economies and circulation' In: *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 42, pp. 206-219.
[20] Beatrice Hibou (2011) *Anatomie politique de la domination* [The political anatomy of domination] (Paris: La Decouverte), p. 57.
[21] Kathleen Stewart (2007) *Ordinary Affects* (Durham: Duke University Press); Brian Massumi (2015) *Politics of Affect* (Cambridge: Polity Press).
[22] Lara Deeb & Mona Harb (2013) *Leisurely Islam: Negotiating geography and morality in Shi'ite Beirut* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press); Laleh Khalili (2016) 'The Politics of Pleasure: Promenading on the Corniche and Beachgoing,' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 34:4, pp. 583-600.

support or mass upheavals. For these reasons, the study of the political anatomy of the everyday bears important repercussions when major events, i.e. revolutions, come to disrupt the normative condition of power.

Alain Badiou, for instance, argues that an 'Event' is the appearance of a complete new ontological dimension that breaks completely with previous experiences of life.[23] The event marks the appearance of the 'repressed' and renders it visible. Badiou describes the temporal dimension of the event as a moment that 'makes us present in the present,'[24] thus emphasising the process of creating new possibilities and time. Slavoj Žižek also contends that an 'Event' happens when "a change of the very frame through which we perceive the world and engage in it"[25] takes place. Undoubtedly, an event is a moment of time that breaks against the normativity of a certain situation, unfolding alternative geographies and power configurations. The event marks a rupture, a caesura with the repetitiousness and ordinariness of the everyday, confronting that power structure within which the everyday is enclosed. The conceptual value of 'events' and revolutions, however, can be epistemologically more romantic but less explanatory and analytical, if lacking its dialectical partner, the everyday.[26]

This study has shown, in fact, that, scholars risk being trapped in numerous pitfalls and limitations when they deal with events without an adequate and appropriate grasp of everyday dynamics. Revolutions tend to obscure continuities, structural preconditions and enabling conditions that allowed, in the first place, their eruption.[27] Like those studies that focuses narrowly on the state, the 'revolutionary' ousting of a president only signals the end of the political authority of a certain regime. Through spectacle of the revolution, however, it is difficult to grasp how people acknowledged their role in those patterns of historical and political development that constituted the power of the regime in the first place. The rhythms of the everyday, therefore, can provide a more reliable "index of historical development than the brief, sporadically erupting event possibly can be."[28] As Henri Lefevbre also comments,

[23] See Alain Badiou (2005) *Being and Event* (London: Bloomsbury) pp. 108-115.
[24] See Ibid. See also Alain Badiou (2003) *Saint Paul - The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press); Alain Badiou (2005) *Metapolitics* (London: Verso Books).
[25] Slavoj Žižek (2014) *Event: Philosophy in Transit* (New York: Penguin Books), p. 10.
[26] See, for instance, Sune Haugbolle & Andreas Bandak (2017) 'The Ends of Revolution: Rethinking Ideology and Time in the Arab Uprisings,' In: *Middle East Critique 26*:3, pp. 191-204.
[27] See John S. Whitehead and William S. Schneider (1987) 'The Singular Event and the Everyday Routine: The Interplay of History and Culture in the Shaping of Memory' In: *The Oral Historical Review* 15:2, pp. 43-79; Frank N. Pieke (1996) *The Ordinary and the Extraordinary: An Anthropological Study of Chinese Reform and the 1989 People's Movement in Bejing* (London: Kegan Paul International).
[28] Saikat Majumdar (2013) *Prose of the World: Modernism and the Banality of Empire* (New York: Columbia University Press), p. 171.

"half a century of historical upheavals have taught us that everyday relations between men – 'lived experience' – change more slowly than the structure of the State."[29] Since the everyday is the 'dialectical partner' of the event, which would have no backdrop against which to emerge, its study is fundamental for those who wish to appreciate and comprehend the nature of the event.[30]

All these connections explain why the study of the everyday matters and deserves scrutiny, particularly when an event disrupts its rhythmical pattern.[31] Revolutions trigger the emergence of those social grievances and demands that otherwise would remain suppressed, but to revolutionise the everyday means building a new ordinariness, while addressing those structures and practices that constituted its unjust nature. A close look at past exchanges, structures and interactions, hence, can help overcome the pitfalls of the present and formulate decisions at the level of policy-making. The ambiguity of everyday practices, for instance, questions the dubious utility of those measures of lustration, such as the Political Isolation Law adopted in Libya post-2011 (see Chapter 8 Section 2), with the aim to ban all those who allegedly are defined as 'collaborators' without taking into account how people participated in the (re)production of power.

Moreover, to analyse how people formulate quotidian notions of the 'good life' in relation to the future can help outline measures of peace-building and security. It allows shaping institutions that contain principles compelling individuals to consult, deliberate, and negotiate with one another as they decide what they consider the good life. The knowledge of everyday dynamics not only provides the relevant means to comprehend what tensions and divisions lie at the core of a conflict before any diplomatic or military involvement is pursued but also allows a better understanding of what procedures to undertake in the establishment of transitional justice periods. The existing sense of suspicion and surveillance during al-Jamāhīrīyah, for instance, already translated into a shared sense of victimization and powerlessness that enabled people to justify the on-going violence. The current record of discriminatory abuses against African refugees in Libya and the emergence of slave-markets already existed and transpired from the everyday dynamics characterising al-Jamāhīrīyah. In this regard, the societal refusal of Qadhdhafi's pan-African policies and the recurring episodes of popular lynching of Africans

[29] Henri Lefebvre (2014) *Critique of Everyday Life: One-Volume Text* (London: Verso), p. 71.
[30] Michael Sayeau (2013) *Against the Event: The Everyday and Evolution of Modernist Narrative* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 1-48.
[31] Similarly, see Billie Jeanne Brownlee & Maziyar Ghiabi (2016) Passive, Silent and Revolutionary: The 'Arab Spring' Revisited In: *Middle East Critique* 25:3, pp. 299-316.

(see Chapter 7 Section 3) suggested the existence of a strong racist attitude among Libyans. A detailed knowledge of those dynamics did not inform the political rationale that guided the military intervention of many Western countries. By neglecting this complex web of dynamics, policy-makers ended up underestimating the consequences of their actions and created more substantive risks in terms of security and terrorism. For instance, the strong and pervasive sense of powerlessness that people shared in the aftermath of 2011 only translated into radical violence, such as the emergence of radical groups, and an on-going refugee crisis.

While the study of the political anatomy of the everyday has both an academic and practical impact, no intellectual work is ever final. Thus, the aim of this conclusion is not to provide definitive answers on the explored topics. The closing section, hence, offers a brief discussion of some of the limits of this study and draws out some of the questions for further exploration that this dissertation has opened up.

9.3 Future Research

The encountered limitations of this study offer the starting point of discussion for future research possibilities. The gender-male balance of the pool of interviewees opens up the possibility to analyse the everyday experiences of women vis-à-vis power. This question deserves particular attention in the case of Libya due to a consistent lack of academic studies that explore topics related to gender and sexuality. Also, the existence of an underlying patriarchal configuration of power during al-Jamāhīrīyah, which this study has shown, provides the grounds for tan examination of the gendering processes and practices that contribute to the construction of the nation. A more comprehensive and analytical focus on the question of heteronormativity and nation building in Libya, stressing how legal, cultural and economic discourses contribute to the supremacy of the masculine, is needed. This also could invite comparative analyses with other regional states that experienced a similar historical trajectory, such as the Arab Republics of Egypt, Iraq and Syria. The necessity to undertake the process of data collection outside Libya and, more importantly, the political and factional instability that characterized the country invites one to ponder the relevance of geography and territory in how people experienced power during al-Jamāhīrīyah. In other words, an analysis of the everyday along regional lines (Tripolitania, Barqa, and Fezzan) or rural/urban areas surely would provide

further insights into the functioning mechanisms of the political anatomy of the everyday in al-Jamāhīrīyah.

The premise of this study, that power is at the heart of everyday practices in Libya, raises vital questions about the current situation in that country. This study has explored only partly how in the aftermath of 2011 people sustained or negated those past exchanges and interactions that characterized al-Jamāhīrīyah. The overall findings, however, offer the necessary empirical bases to assess how past geographies of power and resistance evolved into the current political formations. In this regard, while all the topics presented in this study represent an avenue for future research (i.e., surveillance, fear, corruption, desires, etc.), a focus on other everyday practices (i.e., the uses of social media, internet and religious practices) will clarify further the transition. A study that engages with the continuity and/or transformation of past everyday practices is needed to explain, for instance, the current breakdown of Libya into armed militias and the existence of two separate governments. The rise of another military figure, General Khalifa Hafter, or an Islamist-led government might connect to the heteronormative structure of power that existed under al-Jamāhīrīyah. To analyse those patterns means grasping how the revolution really broke down past structures of power. In addition, there remains a need to engage with the study of political opposition groups (i.e., those operating in exile), their practices and discourses. Future studies could focus on the aspirations and desires, thus 'futurity,' of their political programs and demands, which were shaped in relation to al-Jamāhīrīyah, as well as to their nature of 'being in exile.' Those same studies could also gauge how such aspirations interacted and/or clashed with the existing clusters of desires that characterised Libya before 2011.

In addition, as this study argued, al-Jamāhīrīyah witnessed a slow demise of socialist economic policies that, together with the launch of programs of economic liberalization, favoured the consolidation of power among a class of high military officers ('old-guard'). It would be interesting to inquire what role Western countries and their economies played in such a reconfiguration of power that turned Libya more authoritarian. The recent release of leaked financial documents, called the Panama Papers,[32] revealed the existence of major investments

[32] Hannes Munzinger and Frederik Obermaier (n.d.) 'Lost Treasure,' In: *Panama Papers: The Secrets of Dirty Money*, available online at: http://panamapapers.sueddeutsche.de/articles/573aeac75632a39742ed39a0/ (access date: 14 November 2017); Juliette Garside, Mona Mahmood and David Pegg (2016) 'Gaddafi insider accused of using state cash to buy luxury Scottish hotels' In: *The Guardian*, available online at: https://www.theguardian.com/news/2016/may/16/gaddafi-insider-accused-of-using-state-cash-to-buy-luxury-scottish-hotels (access date: 14 November 2017).

in Western-controlled tax heavens. Hence, a study that focuses on the investment of Libyan capital abroad might reveal the collusion of international finance with autocratic regimes. Another research question relates to how everyday desires of Libyans for modernization and consumerism interact with what Ali Kadri calls the 'unmaking of Arab Socialism.'[33] He argues that Arab republics gradually surrendered to the power of the West and began complying with economic 'imperialist diktat' as a result of their military and ideological defeat following the 1967 War, the signing of the Camp-David Accords between Egypt and Israel and the on-going U.S. militarization of the region.[34] This process took place with the gradual retreat of social benefits, the launch of liberalization programs (*infitah*), [35] increased repression and accumulation of resources and capital among high military-security officers. His study, therefore, suggests that Western countries and Arab governing elites worked together in order to maintain their power, resulting in the abandonment of the working classes. In this regard, there is a need to engage with the nuanced political anatomy of people's everyday aspirations vis-à-vis such macro-approaches. The desire for the same consumerist and Western-like lifestyle adopted by the ruling elites did not simply contribute to the triumph of neo-imperialism, but also represented a form of contestation and resistance vis-à-vis the regime.

The list of open and possible research avenues is much longer than what has been indicated here. As of yet, there is still scope for further conceptual and empirical engagement with Libya and the question of the everyday, power and resistance.

[33] Ali Kadri (2016) *The Unmaking of Arab Socialism* (London: Anthem Press) and Kadri (2017) 'Imperialist Reconstruction or Depopulation in Syria and Iraq' In: *Economy and Society*, available online at: http://www.networkideas.org/featured-articles/2017/04/imperialist-reconstruction-or-depopulation-in-syria-and-iraq/ (access date: 10 January 2017).
[34] Kadri, *The Unmaking of Arab Socialism*, p. 56.
[35] Kadri, in particular, identifies the *infitah* (liberalization) as a key moment, describing it as a "capitulation to every conditionality imposed by the Bretton Woods institutions. Opening up national markets along with geo-political rents levelled the national productive capacity, brought down the protective dual-exchange rate and enacted the Saudi model of earning without effort." Ibid, p. 69.

Appendix A: List of Interviewees

1. Abdul Hakim, 34 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
2. Abdul Rahman, 45 years old, Hull, September 2015.
3. AbdulAziz, 45 years old, Reading, September 2015.
4. Abdullah, 42 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.
5. Ahmed, 28 years old, Italy, August 2015.
6. Ahmed, 32 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
7. Ahmed, 33 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
8. Ahmed, 53 years old, Sheffield, August 2015.
9. Ali, 30 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
10. Ali, 34 years old, Durham, September 2014.
11. Ali, 35 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.
12. Anas, 31 years old, Newcastle, September 2015.
13. Anas, 40 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
14. Basher, 31 years old, Durham, September 2014.
15. Emad, 33 years old, Hull, September 2015.
16. Fareg, 27 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
17. Haitham, 42 years old, Reading, September 2015.
18. Hakim, 29 years old, Italy, July 2015.
19. Hakim, 32 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
20. Hamid, 32 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
21. Hamid, 34 years old, Reading, September 2015.
22. Hamza, 33 years old, Hull, March 2015.
23. Hamza, 40 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
24. Hassan, 29 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
25. Hussein, 24 years old, Italy, July 2015.
26. Hussein, 25 years old, August 2015.
27. Ibrahim, 36 years old, Hull, March 2015.
28. Ihsan, 36 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
29. Ismail, 32 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
30. Kamla, 36 years old, Reading, September 2015.
31. Khaled, 35 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
32. Latif, 40 years old, Italy, July 2015.

33. Mahmoud, 31 years old, Hull, September 2015.
34. Mansour, 40 years old, Durham, September 2014.
35. Mansour, 42 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
36. Marwan, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.
37. Marwan, 45 years-old, Nottingham, April 2015.
38. Mohammed, 28 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
39. Mohammed, 34 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.
40. Mohammed, 35 years old, United States via Skype, September 2015.
41. Mukthar, 28 years old, Durham, May 2015.
42. Mukthar, 37 years old, Nottingham, April 2015.
43. Musa, 35 years old, Hull, March 2015.
44. Mustapha, 37 years old, Egypt via Skype, September 2015.
45. Mustapha, 42 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
46. Nabil, 35 years old, Huddersfield, March 2015.
47. Naji, 33 years old, Reading, September 2015.
48. Nour, 38 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
49. Nuri, 46 years old, Hull, March 2015.
50. Omar, 32 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.
51. Omar, 32 years old, Italy, August 2015.
52. Rabia, 31 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.
53. Rajab, 35 years old, Sheffield, September 2015.
54. Reem, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.
55. Saad, 33 years old, Hull, September 2015.
56. Saif, 34 years old, Manchester, September 2015.
57. Salah, 26 years old, Italy, July 2015.
58. Salim, 29 years old, Reading, September 2015.
59. Samir, 30 years old, Huddersfield, April 2015.
60. Sheik Murad, 50 years old, Nottingham, May 2015.
61. Sufian, 27 years old, Italy, July 2015.
62. Taha, 33 years old, Italy, August 2015
63. Tareq, 40 years old, Newcastle, August 2015.
64. Yassen, 30 years old, Reading, September 2015.
65. Younes, 25 years old, August 2015.
66. Yousef, 38 years old, Egypt via Skype, September 2015.

Appendix B: Sample of Asked Questions

1. Did you study the economic and political ideas of Qadhdhafi in The Green Book? When did you get introduced to it?
2. Did you ever participate to Anniversary of the 1st September Revolution?
3. Did you ever participate to one of the meetings of the Popular Committees? If yes, did you think this organ was the most appropriate to readdress economic/social/political conditions of the lives of the Libyans?
4. How could you find a job in Libya? Was unemployment a problem in Libya?
5. How good was the health system in Libya?
6. Do you know any jokes that mocked the politics of the time?
7. Did you always believe and support the political choices of the regime? If no, when did you start questioning the role of the regime?
8. How did you come to interrogate the politics of the regime from a personal perspective? Was there a specific event or a combination of them that brought you to lose confidence in the regime? If yes, how did you distinguish your beliefs from those of the regime?
9. Do you remember any books, journals, ideas that were copied and circulated secretly among the people, and which had political ideas that clearly were against the regime?
10. One of the stories that – only recently – came to the fore in the media was the Abu Salim massacre in 1996. Are there any other events or anecdotes where you related to the regime in a confrontational manner?
11. Did you expect what happened in 2011?
12. Are you aware of any writer or artist who was using art or books to criticize the regime in a subtle manner?
13. Were you ever involved in everyday acts of rebellion? - If yes, how do you define rebellion?
14. Do you see a difference between those who opposed the regime, such as those who left Libya and those who remained in Libya?
15. Did you have a dress code in Libya to respect in a work/school environment?
16. How did you spend your leisure time?
17. Did you ever play any sport?
18. To what kind of music did you listen?
19. What kind of job did you have in Libya?

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