FILLING THE INTERNATIONAL AND LOCAL GOVERNANCE GAP IN A PRESUMED 'FAILED STATE': LOCAL COUNCILS IN THE OPPOSITION-HELD AREAS OF SYRIA

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY
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IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF SCIENCE
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

MARCH 2018

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

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ABSTRACT

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March 2018, 182 pages

This dissertation focuses on how the governance void is filled by civil and military non-state actors in the territories where state relinquishes control and its institutions cease functioning due to state failure caused by conflicts and civil wars. Providing an insight beyond the state-centric approaches of International Relations and considering the hybrid governance experiences of Chiapas, Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia during the protracted conflicts and civil wars; the case of civil and grassroots-based local councils dispersed across Syria is examined. The objective of the dissertation is to find out the shortcomings of local councils and the challenges they faced in the domains of funding and finance, security and relations with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness. It is argued that despite all endeavors and goodwill, local councils could have neither presented themselves as vertically and horizontally integrated and effective governance structures nor managed to create secure and livable places for their residents due to the shortcomings and challenges during the civil war in Syria.

Keywords: local councils, governance, civil war, failed state, Syria.

ÖZ

‘BAŞARISIZ’ OLARAK NİTELENDİRİLEN BİR DEVLETTE ULUSLARARASI VE YEREL YÖNETİM AÇIĞINI GİDERME: SURİYE’DE MUHALİFLERİN KONTROLÜNDE OLAN BÖLGELERDEKİ YEREL KONSEYLER

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Mart 2018, 182 sayfa

Bu tez, iç savaştan kaynaklanan devlet başarısızlığından dolayı, devletin kontrolünü kaybettiği ve devlet kurumlarının fonksiyonlarını durdurduğu bölgelerde yönetim boşluğunun devlet dışı sivil ve militer unsurlar tarafından nasıl doldurulduğuna odaklanır. Uluslararası İlişkiler disiplininin devlet merkezli yaklaşımların ötesinde bir bakış açısıyla ve Chiapas, Kosova, Somali, ve Kolombiya’nın uzun dönemli çatışma ve iç savaş tecrübelerini göz önünde bulundurarak, son dönemde başarısız bir devlet olarak nitelendirilen Suriye’de dağınık ve halk tabanlı olarak ortaya çıkan yerel konseyleri olgusunu incelenmektedir. Yerel konseylerin fon ve finans, militer gruplarla ilişkisi ve güvenlik, meşruluk ve etkililik bakımından karşılaştığı zorlukların ve eksik yanlarının ortaya çıkarılması amaçlanmıştır. Tüm iyi niyet ve çabalarına rağmen yerel konseylerin iç savaş zarfında karşılaştıkları bu eksiklik ve zorluklardan dolayı yatay ve dikey olarak bütünleşmiş etkili yönetim yapıları sunamadıkları ve bulundukları bölgelerdeki insanlar için güvenli ve yaşanabilir alanlarlar oluşturmayı başaramadıkları ileri sürülmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: yerel konseyler, yönetim, iç savaş, başarısız devlet, Suriye.

To the memory of Aylan Kurdi and others

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This dissertation mainly investigates how the international and local governance gap has been filled by local administrative councils in the opposition-held areas of Syria and political umbrella organizations of these councils mainly located outside of Syria. While Syria is presumed as a failed state in the current circumstances, the objective of the dissertation is to reveal the challenges local governance structures had faced in the domains of funding and finance, security and relations with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness. In doing so, the minor topics to be discussed are characteristics of so-called 'failed states'; how governance gap is filled in the areas where state institutions are dysfunctional; roles of civil society organizations and local governance structures in the midst of conflicts and civil wars; why Syria is considered as a failed state; emergence, evolution, and functions of local administrative councils in the areas where Syrian Army relinquished and state institutions ceased their operations. Technically, this dissertation provides an insight of local councils from a general perspective rather than focusing only one certain sample of local councils or a group of local councils in a certain town or city, so the examples, evidence, and data used are based on various local councils dispersed across Syria. Methodologically, both quantitative and qualitative data were used. The dissertation is mainly based on the analyses of secondary sources such as academic books and journal articles and grey literature including government papers, project reports, research reports and working papers published by think-tanks and civil society organizations including NGOs. Even though any field research was not conducted because of the security concerns in Syria, it has been benefited from interviews, surveys, dissertations in related topics, online news sources, various websites, and YouTube videos. The research was mainly conducted on the topics of

state theories, state failure, civil war, rebel governance, civil society organizations, humanitarian aid, Arab Spring, and local administrative councils.

As heading into its seventh year without an end to the civil war in Syria, more than 300 thousand people were killed.[1] More than 14 million were wounded and internally or externally displaced.[2] 12.8 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance in Syria.[3] More than 4.81 million people from Syria fled to Turkey, Lebanon, Jordan, Iraq, and Egypt.[4] These figures are often regarded as a statistics, but in fact, each person composing these numbers has been living a tragedy or left a tragic story behind. News channels across the world have frequently reported how the attempts to escape to European countries have often ended with disappointment or loss of life. The ongoing circumstances during the civil war have demonstrated Syria as a devastated country along with Yemen and Libya since the beginning of so-called Arab Spring. Therefore, Syria is presumed as a failed state since it goes through tough times in its history and presents the characteristics of state failure.

Indeed, the state system in Syria was eroded; many sub-state actors have risen to the surface; intense and widespread hostilities sparked off senseless and brutal conflicts; refugee crisis and security concerns have become one of the top problems in the world. In the case of long-lasting state failure, not only the demolishment of the critical state institutions such as security and legal system is witnessed, but also, more tragically, national identity and citizenship are heavily wounded. In this

[1] Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of World's Human Rights, Syria, https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/.

[2] Syrian Observatory For Human Rights, accessed 20 June 2017, http://www.syriahr.com/en/?p=62760.

[3] "Syria's Refugee Crisis in Numbers," Amnesty International, accessed 12 January 2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/09/syrias-refugee-crisis-in- numbers/.

[4] UNHCR and UNDP, "*Regional, Refugee and Resilience (3RP) Plan 2017 – 2018: In Response to the Syria Crisis*," Regional Strategic Overwiew, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/52586.

context, there are crucial questions needed to be asked: how can people living in such a country continue their lives, provide protection for themselves, meet their basic needs, and respond to their collective problems? In such a disaster situation, what would be the most effective strategy to be followed in the region or in any country had similar troubles?

To find an answer to these questions, Menkhaus gives a clue. To him, the depiction of the countries where state institutions ceased operation as "Mad Max anarchy" where a cocktail of armed groups, warlords, and various criminals are present, and all together harass and disturb helpless people; or as "libertarian paradise" where people enjoy the highest level of freedom, are rid of taxes and benefit from unfettered business environment is grossly wrong.[5] Instead, during conflicts and civil wars, people tend to look for an authority that can protect their lives, provide shelter and basic necessities. Hence, local people or insurgent groups could form political governance structures in order to cope with messy and difficult conditions to a certain extent so that they could move on their lives during a conflict and civil war.[6] Additionally, the aim of insurgent groups, in particular, is usually observed as the consolidation of their authority and application of their own political agendas through the formation of governance systems.

This argument was widely verified by the encountered developments on the ground after the eruption of conflict, and then, civil war in Syria. Local councils, grassroots-based governance structures formed spontaneously, have endeavored to fill the governance gap in the areas where Syrian government had relinquished the control during the civil war. These councils have taken a critical role in the distribution of humanitarian aid, opening makeshift schools and hospitals, pioneering the formation of ad-hoc courts, mediation and conflict resolution, dealing with purchase and sale of real estate agreements, provision of key municipal services including garbage collection, supplying potable water and electricity, and so on. Not only local

[5] Menkhaus (2014: 143).

[6] Menkhaus (2014: 143), Arjona (2016: 100).

governance but also they dealt with international governance via their umbrella organizations particularly. While local councils were guiding international NGOs and aid organizations in the field, their umbrella organizations got in touch with foreign governments, international and regional institutions, and civil society organizations including foreign NGOs and aid donors.

To a certain extent, local councils gained autonomy and enjoyed legitimacy in their locations despite various challenges they have faced. With the establishment of umbrella organizations, the structure of local councils had been vertically and horizontally developed. Also, elections have been held to determine members of many local councils under the tough circumstances. However, it should not be forgotten that Syrian society is predominantly agricultural and grew up in a political environment where a limited democratic process has been experienced. Besides this, the local councils were produced in difficult circumstances accompanied by a civil war. Therefore, as it could be expected, their structures remained fragile except for some certain cases. Nevertheless, while the attitudes of Syrian government have been considered as “atrocity” and “persecution” towards its own citizens, and there have been criminal organizations such as the IS and al-Nusra on the ground and gained legitimacy to a certain extent through distribution of humanitarian aid and provision of public services, the significance and value of civil governance structures promoted by relatively moderate local councils can be comprehended well.

Nevertheless, the initial development of local councils as grassroots organizations took a backseat due to the disregard of both international media and academia. International media has focused more on the negative developments like casualties in the civil war, global impact of the refugee crisis, or barbarity of the Islamic State such as beheading and enslavement practices. This preference in coverage may be due to the vantage point of media agencies, their perception regarding the most significant consequences of the civil war, or rating concerns. On the other hand, in general, most of the studies about insurrection, revolution, and civil war focus on military confrontations, the reasons regarding why and how the event started, and its

outcomes. However, these do not usually reflect all dimensions of an episode. Territorial control and governance structures established by civilians and rebel groups, rebel-civilian relations, and ideological motivation behind rebellion have been less researched. This may be due to the dominance of state-centric perspectives in International Relations. Yet, one of a few positive developments in the midst of the conflict and civil war in Syria is the emergence of grassroots movements like local coordination committees and local administrative councils as a result of the collaboration of individuals to present their political will and manage their daily lives.

The governance model civil local councils have presented deserves much more attention in order to find out new ideas to solve the social problems in the countries whose societies are affected by conflicts and civil wars. In terms of legitimacy, capability, effectiveness, and accountability; the experience of local councils needs to be analyzed and evaluated not only by the development community but also by academicians and scholars as well. Moreover, the expertise they have, democratic procedures they apply, the participation of youth and women in the administrative bodies, and the challenges regarding financial situation, security, the relations with rebel groups, etc. need to be revealed and thought how to improve the resistance of local councils. To strengthen civil local administrations, first of all, the international community including western governments, international NGOs, aid organizations, and donors are required to get in touch with them. Indeed, supporting and building up civil administrative structures and providing security to them could solve many problems in the countries diagnosed with state failure since not everybody is able to leave everything behind and flee from such countries when a civil war erupts.

In a sequence, the first chapter in this dissertation critically reviews the literature of failed state, discuss the issues of state dysfunctionality, and identify failed states on the theoretical ground. The second chapter explains civil society and local governance structures in the midst of conflicts and civil war by relying on both theory and experiences of some countries. The following chapter more specifically

discusses why Syria is presumed as a failed state and points out the fragmented governance structure. The last chapter deals with the case of local administrative councils in Syria and analyzes them in terms of funding and finance, provision of security and the relationship with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness.

In more detail, the first chapter explores the literature on failed state through focusing on emergence and evolvement of the term 'failed state', explaining the imageries the term evokes and referring to relevant notions. By pointing out the functions of modern states, the case of state dysfunctionality is reflected, and the characteristics of failed states are identified. Also, the critiques of the concept itself and of the literature on failed state are highlighted. Even though the concept is widely known as a Post-Cold War phenomenon and has been associated with security concerns after the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001, it is also discussed on the ground of imperialism and post-colonialism. In the second section, Weber's definition of state and the capabilities, capacity, and functions of modern states are considered before searching how failed states are defined and explained in the literature. Finally, the critics towards the concept 'failed state' regarding ontological, methodological and ethical shortcomings are highlighted. Throughout the chapter, the views of many scholars and academics, contributions of development institutions regarding the research on state failure, and a wide range of concepts and notions are discussed.

The second chapter discusses civil society institutions and organic local governance structures in the countries where state's control over peripheral territory is relinquished, its monopoly over the means of violence is broken down by sub-state actors, and its institutions including citizenship are eroded to some certain degrees due to the conditions stemming from a protracted conflict and civil war. While the notions like hybrid political order, institutional multiplicity, parallel governance, and governance without government, and the terms like rebelocracy and aliocracy derived from the cases of Chiapas, Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia provide us an insight beyond the state-centric approaches of International Relations, the difference

between and within peacebuilding and statebuilding literatures regarding the contribution of local governance structures is implied. The relations, interactions, and cooperation between civil society organizations, particularly NGOs, and local governance structures are emphasized since their activities are life-sustaining for residents to move on their lives, get protection, acquire their basic needs, respond to collective problems on the ground. The collaboration between them is also substantial in filling the authority and administrative gap, and so in creating relatively a peaceful and predictable environment during conflicts and civil wars despite their shortcomings and the problems they often encounter. Throughout the chapter, the insights are mainly drawn from the contribution to the literature by Menkhaus (2007, 2014) regarding the case of Somalia; by Paffenholz and Spurk (2006) and Dudouet (2007) regarding civil society organizations in the midst of conflicts and civil wars; by Boege et al. (2008, 2009) and Brown et al. (2010) regarding hybrid political orders; by Van der Haar and Heijke (2013) and Van der Borgh (2012) regarding parallel structures in the cases of Chiapas, Mexico and Kosovo; by Gafaro et al. (2004) regarding relations of armed groups and local people in the case of Colombia; and by Arjona (2014, 2016) regarding social order and institutions during wartime in Colombia.

The third chapter aims to investigate how the current conditions in Syria are compatible with the characteristics of failed states explained in the first chapter. While it is emphasized that the civil war was a result of the confrontation between government and political opposition during the uprisings of Arab Spring, the fragmentation of the opposition on the basis of sectarian and ethnical divisions and intervention of external actors in the phase of civil war are seen as the major reasons behind the protraction of war which led to further erosion of social cohesion. In order to understand whether Syria is diagnosed with state failure, it is focused on different sub-state actors competing with government and as well as each other to gain power, devastating consequences of the civil war including the break of monopoly over means of violence, lack of state legitimacy, emergence and flourishing of terrorist organizations, casualties, internally displaced persons, refugees, and appearance of

different forms of governance. While synchronically mainstream non-state actors are briefly introduced, on the other hand, the statistical data provided by the UNHCR, UNDP, Fund for Peace and as well as some news sources are used to inform about the course and consequences of the civil war.

Finally, the fourth chapter focuses on the local administrative councils formed and developed in the opposition-held areas where the military battalions of the Free Syrian Army and other armed coalitions have been active. While the period of time is mainly taken as between the beginning of 2012 and the end of 2015, the background theme of the chapter is how the authority and administrative void has been filled in the specific case of local councils in the areas where Syrian Army withdrew. The main objective is to find out the challenges local councils faced and as well as their shortcomings in terms of funding and finance, security and relationship with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Not only the challenges and shortcomings but also some accomplishments have been done by local councils are discussed. Also, the chapter begins with the emergence and evolution of local councils, their roles, functions, and scope of activities in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the topic. Thus, it becomes possible to make an analysis and evaluation of local councils from a general perspective.

CHAPTER 2

THE LITERATURE ON FAILED STATE: A CRITICAL REVIEW

In this chapter, the literature over failed state including emergence, development, and explanation of the concept 'failed state', relevant concepts indicating state dysfunctionality, identifying the characteristics of failed states, the notoriety of the concept, and the critiques of the concept and as well as of the literature on failed states are discussed. First of all, emergence of the concept in the very early stages of the post-Cold War and then how the perception regarding to failed states has changed particularly after the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001 are stated. Also, influence of imperialism and postcolonialism in explaining failed states is reflected. Secondly, how state dysfunctionality and failed states are defined and explained in the literature by underlining capabilities, capacity, and functions of state. Lastly, the critiques against the concept 'failed state' and the relevant literature risen from ontological, methodological and ethical issues are highlighted.

2.1. The Term 'Failed State' and Relevant Concepts

Many concepts have been used interchangeably to describe weaknesses of states institutions and the existence of similar depressed and malignant circumstances in some certain countries. These concepts include 'weak', 'failing', 'failed' 'fragile', 'collapsed', 'dysfunctional', 'quasi', 'at risk', 'ungoverned', and so forth. These are often applied to explain the problem of dysfunctionality in state mechanism. This variety in the usage of concepts also indicates a complexity to determine the degree of state failure. Indeed, the states identified with these terms are not equally strong or weak, and they do not have the same performance in different spheres of functioning areas. Therefore, it has been often attempted to categorize these concepts to illustrate semantic differences among them. For example, Gros mentions five sorts of states -

which are anarchic, phantom (miracle), anaemic, captured, and aborted - in order to show that the states in developing world are not equally failed.[7] While Rotberg explains four stages of failure which are weak, failing, failed, and collapsed;[8] Howard reduces these stages into two groups: failing and failed.[9] Moreover, Miner draws a venn diagram and asserts that fragile states encompass weak, failing, failed, and collapsed states.[10] To him, fragility can also be understood as a measure of state performance.[11] It is possible to augment the number of these examples. The taxonomy efforts to make distinctions are analyzed in more detail in the next section.

The concept 'failed state' was born in troubled and distressed juncture of world history. Since the Western capitalist system was ready to be crowned through the transformation of newly-established states on the remnants of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s, the end of the Cold War witnessed a series of state building operations and neoliberal economic reforms by the hands of international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF). The political instability, inadequate state capacity, corruption, intra-state and inter-state disputes, and violent actions in the new states in Central Asia and Caucasus were the main determinants behind the motivation to bring them all in the winner system promoted by the USA and Western European states.

On the other hand, humanitarian concerns, internal conflict, and abuse of human rights became the main reasons behind violation of state sovereignty to a certain extend as moral motivation of the interventions in 1990s, especially in the Third World. To maintain peace and security and to support human rights and democracy

[7] Gros (1996).

[8] Rotberg (2004).

[9] Howard (2010).

[10] Carment and Samy (2014: 3 - 5).

[11] *Ibid.*

in the countries torn by conflict, the United Nations have authorized 69 peacekeeping operations from 1948 to 2013.[12] There have been 51 peacekeeping operations following the year 1990. The end of the Cold War dramatically increased the number of UN peacekeeping missions. The UN Security Council deployed 20 new operations between 1989 and 1994. Even, the year 1992 witnessed the creation of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as a unit within the United Nations. Currently, there have been 20 peacekeeping operations under the directive of DPKO. From Angola and Somalia in Africa to Bosnia and Herzegovina in Europe, from Haiti and El Salvador in Americas to Afghanistan and Pakistan in Asia, and Lebanon and Syria in Middle East, and many countries in different continents had been subjects of the UN peacekeeping missions.

Economic assistance, foreign and military aid distributed by the United States (US) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) during the Cold War enabled many states around the world, those in Africa and East Asia in particular, to sustain their existence despite their weak structure, poor performance of provision in public services, and lack of internal stability.[13] Some scholars like Ignatieff and Zartman, therefore, discusses that the end of the Cold War has affected some relatively weak states in a negative way by deteriorating their prior status quo since economic and military aid ceased.[14] The regimes in those weak states could not find adequate resources to distribute to their supporters and keep up their militaries for sustaining control and order within their borders.[15] For this reason, the concept 'failed state' became prevalent and has been widely used in the relevant literature after the demise of the bipolar world in 1991. The article "Saving Failed States", written by Helman

[12] United Nations, List of Peacekeeping Operations 1948 – 2013, http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/documents/operationslist.pdf.

[13] Zartman (1995: 75, 225-228, 272).

[14] Rosh (1989); Zartman (1995), Ignatieff (2002); Helman and Ratner (Winter 1992 - 1993), Ayoob (1996).

[15] Ezrow and Frantz (2013: 75).

and Ratner, in Foreign Policy in 1992 has an initiatory role in the employment of the concept widely by policy makers and other scholars.

However, not all scholars agree that the concept 'failed state' is simply a Post-Cold War phenomenon. Some scholars have preferred to explain the concept on the ground of postcolonialim.[16] Since failed states are regarded as a product of the process of 'state failure'[17], it is thought that the effects of colonialism challenged to create successful institutions and national identities in postcolonial states, particularly in Africa.[18] Therefore, in the early 1990, Robert Jackson denominated a group of states in Africa as 'quasi states' which had not succeeded to establish firm state institutions.[19] Indeed, after the World War I and World War II, many states in Africa, Middle East, and Asia gained their independence from the European rulers. Nevertheless, many of these states faced ethnic, religious and linguistic problems in their artificially drawn boundaries in the processes of state formation, especially those in Africa.

On the other hand, due to widely usage of the term by foreign policy makers, it has also been argued that the term is a practical tool to legitimize any foreign intervention to the states labeled with 'failed'.[20] Therefore, the term 'failed state' has

[16] See Gordon (1997), Gros (1996), Ayoob (1996), Milliken and Krause (2002), and Hill (2005).

[17] Rotberg (2004).

[18] Ezrow and Frantz (2013: 56).

[19] Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

[20] The tie established between failed states and terrorism after the 9/11 gave an excuse to the US to suspend the principle of national sovereignty for the invasion of Afghanistan. At that time, the focal point was national security that was under threat of terrorists emerged from failed states (Rice 2003; 3, state/USAID Strategic Plan Fiscal Years 2004 – 2009; 7,13). Moreover, the US policy makers used the notion "the war on terrorism" to facilitate gaining both international and public support for the military intervention when necessary (National Security Strategy, 2002). When the link between failed states and terrorism was revealled, and per contra, the notions such as 'national security', 'promotion of democracy' and the 'war on terror' were animated, the politicians became able to gain ground for introduction of

been highly involved in the debates regarding new versions of imperialism, hegemony and colonialism. Since failed states are supposed to pose problems and threats for international order, mostly referred to capitalist order, new forms of imperialism have been put forward. Attracting notice that failed states - and the relevant notions such as 'weak', 'fragile', 'collapsed' states - have a central position in the foreign policy discourses of the United States, United Kingdom, Canada, Australia and the European Union, Jones thinks that the notion 'failed state' reproduces and consolidates imperial structures, and legitimizes and normalizes imperial interventions in the Third World.[21] Hanieh, moreover, reminds Deepak Lal's argument that Africa and Middle East have so many failed states simply "because they have been endowed with natural resources that provide an irresistable urge to the 'predatory' instincts of state elites".[22] Indeed, this argument is quite striking to show how the concept 'failed state' is so practical for powerful states to attain their objectives in Middle East and Africa. On the other hand, Mallaby claims that great powers had not been proned to animate imperialistic behaviors and they had refused to impose their institutions on 'disorderly societies' since the World War II.[23] However, to him, it was harder to sustain this tendency because threats including terrorism, drug supply, and immigration problems are ascending together with the population in those 'dysfunctional states'. [24] Despite "Bush administration's denigration of nation building and its refusal to participate peacekeeping force for Afghanistan", Mallaby thinks that it was "too compelling for Bush administration to

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new foreign policies with the higher public support. Also, Gulseven's master thesis provides a better understanding about the role of failed state discourse in the US foreign policy (Gülseven 2005).

[21] Branwen G. Jones, "The global political economy of social crisis: Towards a critique of the 'failed state' ideology", *Review of International Political Economy* 15, No. 2, (2008): 180 – 205. DOI: 10.1080/09692290701869688.

[22] Adam Hanieh, "Praising Empire: Neoliberalism under Pax Americana", in *The New Imperialists: Ideologies of Empire,* ed. Colin Mooers, (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006), p. 188.

[23] Mallaby (2002: 2).

[24] *Ibid.*

resist the logic of neo-imperialism" due to the dangers arisen from failed states.[25]

Furthermore, the discussions around failed states have been mainly associated with development and national security because poor economic performance and political instability had been considered as two primary reasons of failed state.[26] However, failed states have been populously regarded as a threat for global peace since the Al-Qaeda's 9/11 terrorist attack on the United States in 2001, and then the term has widely been attracted by policy-makers. The arguments based on humanitarian aid and developmental concerns have gained a secondary role. George W. Bush's National Security Strategy in 2002 underlined that the US is "threatened less by conquering states than [they] are by failing ones."[27] Also, in his speech to United Nations, he stated: "Every nation that seeks peace has an obligation to help build that world. Eventually there is no safe isolation from terror networks or failed states that shelter them or outlaw regimes or weapons of mass destruction."[28] Not only Bush, the zeitgeist of that time also nudged Jack Straw, the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary of the United Kingdom: "Terrorists are strongest when states are weakest. ... Failed states make life miserable, or much worse, for those unfortunate enough to live there. But in a globalized world, this misery is exported to every corner of the world."[29] Since the term was popular in the field of politics at that time, complaints were heard from the Pacific region as well. When Australian Prime Minister gave a speech upholding the intervention to the Solomon Islands in

[25] *Ibid.,* p. 6.

[26] *Ibid.,* Ezrow and Frantz, p. 39.

[27] The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002.

[28] George W. Bush's speech to the United Nations General Assembly (2004), Bush's Address to U.N. General Assembly, New York Times, accessed 2 February 2017, http://www.nytimes.com/learning/students/pop/articles/20040922-PTEX.html.

[29] Jack Straw's speech given to the International Institute of Strategic Studies, "Jack Straw: There is nothing inevitable in the failure of states", Independent, 25 October 2001, accessed 2 February 2017, http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/commentators/jack-straw-there-is-nothing-inevitable-in-the-failure-of-states-9175307.html.

the federal parliament, he underlined that it would be more costly and difficult to deal with the problem if the Solomon Islands becomes a failed state and then this situation is exploited by drug dealers, money launderers, and international terrorism.[30] These statements from politicians illustrate in which ground the term 'failed state' has gained more notoriety in the post 9/11 period.

In the same manner, the concerns regarding global security arisen from failed states have been seen in the works of scholars and academics as well. Fukuyama argues that failing and weak states have threatened international order in terms of human rights abuses, humanitarian disasters, massive waves of immigration and attacking their neighbors since the end of Cold War. He adds that since September 11, these states have hosted international terrorists who could cause loses in the United States and other developed countries.[31] Krasner and Pascual also point out that weak and failed states pose a risk to the U.S. and global security. They remind the "deadliest attack ever on the U.S. homeland" and Afghanistan's profile as one of the poorest countries in the world, but also as the first base for the attack: "the problems of other countries often do not affect them alone."[32] Moreover, Tiffany Howard attempts to explain the linkage between terrorism and failed states. He illustrates that some failing and failed states are breeding grounds for both domestic and transnational terrorist organizations, and underlines that political violence which leads to terrorism is rising in the conditions of state fragility.[33]

In addition, there are some nuances among scholars as well. By drawing attention to the differences between weak and failing states, Patrick specifies that terrorists opt

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[30] Tarcisius T. Kabutaulake, "'Failed State' and the War on Terror: Intervention in Solomon Island", *Asia Pacific Issues,* No. 72 (March 2004): 5.

[31] Fukuyama (2004: 92 - 93).

[32] Stephen D. Krasner and Carlos Pascual, "Addressing State Failure", *Foreign Affairs,* July/August 2015, accessed 5 February 2017, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2005-07-01/addressing-state-failure.

[33] Howard (2014: 1-8, 154).

for weak but functioning states with sufficient infrastructure for their operations.[34] According to him, collapsed and lawless polities like Somalia or Liberia are less attractive than Pakistan or Kenya. He says: "the source of radical Islamic terrorism may reside less in state weakness in the Middle East than in the alienation of de-territorialized Muslims in Europe. The 'safe havens' of global terrorists are as likely to be the banlieues of Paris as the wastes of the Sahara or the Slums of Karachi."[35]

Eventually, either politicians or scholars often highlight the linkage between failed states and terrorism after the event of 9/11 in 2001. Intervention for humanitarian reasons and efforts of civil society organizations dealing with the developmental issues in weak and presumed failed states were drastically replaced by military interventions mainly driven by national and global security concerns of the developed world. Failed states have been widely seen as the roots of evilness since they connotate terrorism, piracy, arms and drug trafficking, refugee influx, etc. Recently, though circumstances in some certain countries in MENA region afterwards so-called Arab Spring, emergence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), and ascending terrorist attacks in the western countries, Syrian refugee crisis, and piracy activities in high seas resuscitated the notoriety of failed states.

In this section, externa reasons of presumed failed states and the reflections of them in the outside world are mostly implied for the sake of continuity and cohesion of the thought. In fact, it is better to remind that the debates about causes of failed states mainly focus on two categories: external causes and internal causes. The discussion of failed state by highlighting external causes includes the debates around colonialism, imperialism, military intervention, global security concerns, and so on. Besides these, some scholars explain failed or weak states on the basis of

[34] Steaward Patrick, "Weak States and Global Threats: Fact or Fiction?", *The Washington Quarterly* 29, No. 2 (Spring 2006): 27 – 53.

[35] *Ibid.*, p. 35.

dependency theory and world system theory.[36] Differently from external and systemical causes, Migdal, for instance, goes beyond core – periphery relations and analyzes the relations between state and society to answer why many states, or societies, in the Third World have difficulties in "regulating social relations" and following the leader's aim, which are two main capabilities strong states possess.[37] Moreover, according to Gros, there are five internal indicators of state failure which are economic stagnation, social dislocation basically due to the lack of middle class, authoritarianism, militarism as the biggest threat to stability and nation building, and lastly rapid population growth while natural resources are shrunk. Notwithstanding, he thinks that ethnical and linguistic heterogeneity is not necessarily a reason of state decay if these differences are managed well and not abused by elites for their own gains.

In the next section, state dysfunctionality and the characteristics of failed state are discussed. Also, since the classification efforts aim to make distinctions among meanings of the concepts bringing similar postures to mind, the relevant concepts and taxonomy efforts are also analyzed in more detail in the next section besides reviewing state dysfunctionality and the literature identifying the characteristics of failed states.

2.2. State Dysfunctionality and Identifying Failed States

Before seeking for how failed states are explained and their characteristics are identified in the literature, in fact, it is useful to first take a glance at the concepts 'statehood' and 'modern state' to understand what a state is and why it fails. In this regard, it is likely to come across Weber's definition of state when the literature of failed states is reviewed. Weber makes a definition of state as "human community that successfully claims the monopoly of the legitimate use of physical force within a

[36] See Conteh – Morgan (2006), Ezrow and Frantz (2013: 68 - 71).

[37] Migdal (1988).

given territory."[38] He argues that modern state has administrative and legal branches regulated by legislation, and also it has binding authority on the basis of rules over "citizens", "members of state", and "all actions take place in the area of its jurisdiction".[39] This area is the territory where state has monopoly of using force legitimately. Also, in Weber's definition, territorial integrity of a state is supposed to be respected by other states.

Relying on the Weber's definition of state, Fukuyama argues that the essence of 'stateness' is enforcement. With his own words, "the ultimate ability to send someone with a uniform and a gun to force people to comply with the state's laws."[40]

Weber's state conception, however, does not encompass all the areas where modern state functions today. It is basically because there is a wide set of duties and responsibilities including the delivery of various services what is attributed to stateness.[41] That is, it also matters to know the functions of modern states to grasp the characteristics of failed states because when a state could not carry out the functions it is in charge of, this state is often presumed as a failed state in the relevant literature.

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[38] William J. Novak, "Beyond Max Weber: The need for a democratic (not aristocratic) theory of the modern state", The Tocqueville Review/La revue Tocqueville 36, No. 1 (2015): 43 – 91, https://muse.jhu.edu/article/584856.

[39] Ibid., p. 55 – 56. See also Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization,* edited by Talcott Parsons, (New York: Free Press, 1964), p. 156.

[40] Fukuyama (2004: 6).

[41] The concept 'stateness', which is introduced by Peter Nettle (Nettle 1968), implies state capacity to exercise its basic functions. State capacity, efficiency, and performance of state's institutions are related to stateness. It is mostly referred to domestic political capabilities. (Ilyin, et al. 2012) Stateness and statehood are not the same concepts. Statehood requires international legitimacy and recognition of state sovereignty within its borders. However, the meaning of stateness can be interpreted as only the ability to govern a certain territory, but not necessarily as a polity with international recognition. That is, it can be a de facto structure as well (Arieff 2008). In addition, as it is noticed above, Fukuyama explains two dimensions of stateness that are the scope of state activities and the strength of state power.

Table 1. Functions of state[42]

<table>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">Addressing market failure</td><td>Improving equity</td></tr>
<tr><td>Minimal functions</td><td colspan="3">Providing pure public goods:
Defense
Law and order
Property rights
Macroeconomic management
Public health</td><td>Protecting the poor:
Antipoverty programs
Disaster relief</td></tr>
<tr><td>Intermediate functions</td><td>Addressing externalities:
Basic education
Environmental protection</td><td>Regulating monopoly:
Utility regulation
Antitrust policy</td><td>Overcoming imperfect information:
Insurance (health, life, pensions)
Financial regulation
Consumer protection</td><td>Providing social insurance:
Redistributive pensions
Family allowances
Unemployment insurance</td></tr>
<tr><td>Activist functions</td><td colspan="3">Coordinating private activity:
fostering markets
Cluster initiatives</td><td>Redistribution:
Asset redistribution</td></tr>
</table>

It is also equally important that different states show different performance when they carry out their duties and responsibilities. That is, what state does and how it does matter. In this regard, Fukuyama distinguishes between scope of state activities which refers to the variety of functions and goals undertaken by governments, and strength of state which refers to state's (institutional) capacity, ability to plan and implement policies and enforce laws.[43] [44] As Fukuyama gives reference to the list of

[42] World Bank, *World Development Report 1997: The State in a Changing World*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.

[43] Fukuyama (2004: 7).

[44] By giving reference to Lipset's words (Lipset 1995), Fukuyama (2004: 6 - 7) establishes a connection between emergence of the United States and its stateness characteristics. Since the United States was emerged after the American Revolution, which was a revolution against state authority posed by the Great Britain, state power was restricted and divided (clear seperation of powers) in American political culture. Thus, Fukuyama argues that this

state functions provided by the World Bank's World Development Report in 1997, the change in scope of state activities and strength of state over time is inevitable.

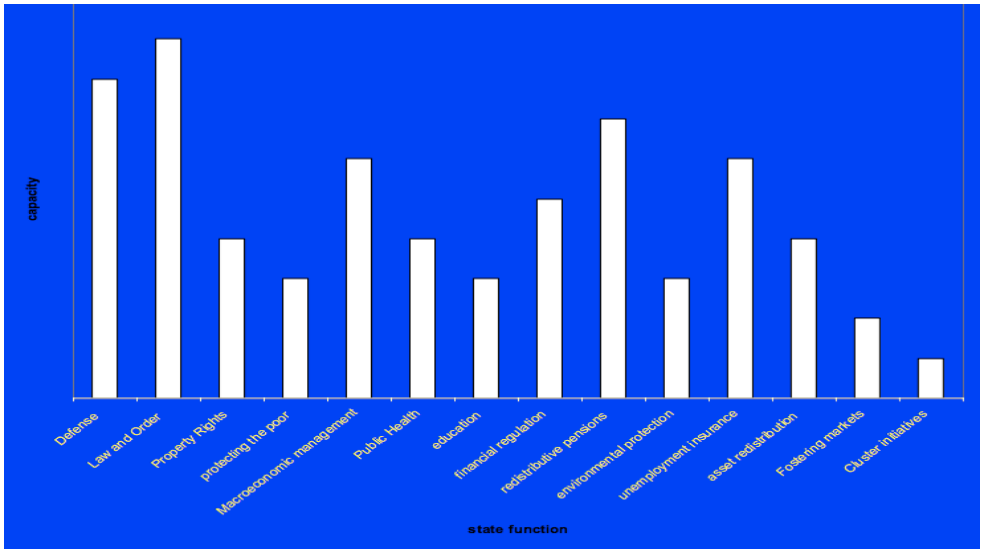

Figure 1. State capacity[45]

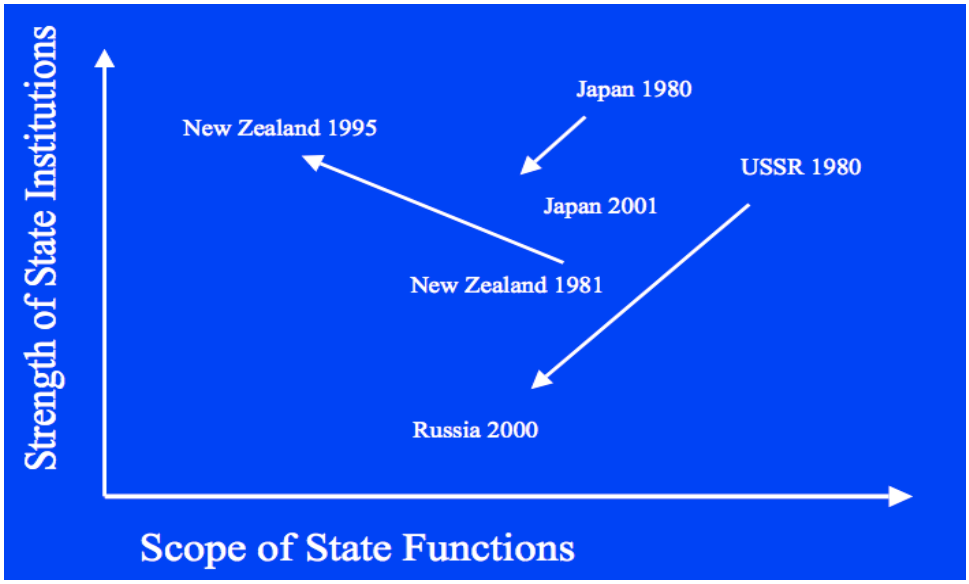

Figure 2. Change over time[46]

political culture leads a limited government and a narrow scope of state activities. Nevertheless, he concludes that the ability of the United States within granted scope is very strong in terms of creating and enforcing laws and policies.

[45] Fukuyama (2004: 10)

As Migdal exhibits differences between strong and weak states, his main measurement is capabilities of state including the capacity "to penetrate society, regulate social relationships, extract resources, and appropriate or use resources in determined ways". To him, while strong states are able to perform these duties thanks to high state capabilities, weak states with low capabilities cannot show the same performance.[47] In the same vein, Rotberg, by pointing the difference between strong and weak states in terms of their capability and capacity, argues that strong states provide political goods in a hierarchical order where supply of security is the most critical one.[48] With the provision of security, other functions of modern state come into prominence. These functions include the provisions of the state agencies (institutions) solving the disputes between state and citizens, or among citizens, rule of law and judicial system, security of property and contracts, a set of values for social cohesion, participation in political processes, civil and human rights, provision of welfare services including health care and education, infrastructure, a well-designed economic environment, and support for civil society.[49]

In addition, Ghani and Lockhart expand the list of state functions and determine ten functions of the ideal state by pointing out multifunctional and dynamic characteristics of state in the twenty-first century.[50] First of all, rule of law is regarded as glue that binds the whole parts of state system and arranges every sphere of social and economic life. Second, Weberian definition of state is recalled and state is seen as the sole monopoly over the means of violence. This has a close link to security of state and its citizens. Third, administrative control by professional staff in various parts of bureaucratic system is crucial for the principle of continuity in state

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[46] Fukuyama (2004: 14)

[47] Migdal (1988: 4 - 5).

[48] Rotberg (2003: 3).

[49] *Ibid.,* p. 3 - 4.

[50] Ghani and Lockhart (2008: 124 - 166).

affairs. Fourth, sound management of public finances makes states able to achieve objectives, set priorities, and conduct projects for public interest. Fifth, since human capital plays an important role to prevent conflicts and enhance democratic standards in a country, states are aware of the importance of investments in human capital. Sixth, states implement social policies to create common values and identities that prevent clashes and discrimination in society so that citizenship consciousness is created and rights are preserved. Seventh, state has undertaken the responsibility for providing infrastructure services, which is substantial for development. Eighth, state maintains soundness and expansion of the market by setting and enforcing rules, protect and support private enterprise, and interference in the market during crises. Ninth, state has tremendous resources including material assets such as money capital and natural capital like rivers and minerals, and intangible assets such as licenses. The management, allocation and maintenance of these assets are mainly carried out by state. Finally, since the core of banking system is public borrowing, state is highly involved in the financial sector.

Moreover, for the sake of simplicity, Ezrow and Frantz categorized important functions of state in five groups: "monopoly over violence, administrative services and infrastructure, social services, judicial services and economic performance."[51]

When failure occurs in one or several of these functions, state can be regarded as dysfunctional. Similarly, when state institutions give error to fulfill its functions due to various reasons, state dysfunctionality is associated with failure of state. Therefore, state dysfunctionality is significant to understand the phenomenon of failed state and the similar circumstances illustrated by the relevant concepts. For this reasons, while Ezrow and Frantz derive the main categories of state functions mentioned above from different definitions of state failure,[52] Rotberg considers functions of modern state as the criteria which allow us to judge nation states

[51] Ezrow and Frantz (2008: 19 - 23).

[52] *Ibid.,* p. 19.

whether they are strong, weak, or failed.[53] Moreover, Ghani and Lockhart conclude that running of all the ten functions simultaneously generates "sovereignty dividend" where synergy and trust in the system create opportunity for citizenry and legitimacy for policy makers and their decisions.[54] On the contrary, lack of trust and legitimacy for government and state institutions and popular dissatisfaction can take place in the absence or poor performance of several of these functions. If this situation goes further, it leads violence and even sovereignty gap.[55]

The faults with the functions of state are closely tied to causes of failed states. As it is mentioned in the next section, variety of indicators, measures, and similar concepts lead to ambiguity on the term 'failed state', so a wide array of definitions and explanations have emerged in the literature. Gros, for instance, identified failed states as "those in which public authorities are either unable or unwilling to carry out their end of what Hobbes long ago called the social contract, but which now includes more than maintaining the peace among society's many factions and interests."[56] He adopted Weber's definition of the ideal statehood to identify the criteria that can be associated with failed states.[57] That is, if state cannot make the all segments of society recognize its authority and does not legitimately maintain the monopoly over the means of violence within boundaries of country, then this state can be considered as failed. Gros' words about the origin of failure also defend this opinion. To him, the origin of state failure is rooted in "an overall breakdown of the corpus of formal and informal rules governing society, accompanied by the disappearance of formal authority or its emaciation."[58]

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[53] Rotberg (2003: 4).

[54] *Ibid.,* p. 163.

[55] *Ibid.*

[56] Gros (1996: 456).

[57] Gros (1996).

[58] *Ibid*., p. 457.

Moreover, Gros identifies five types of failed states on basis of their degree of failure.[59] In anarchic type of failed state, there is no central government, and armed groups under warlords compete for controlling cities and regions that have strategic or symbolic importance for them. Teenage fighters can be observed in the armed confrontations. Somalia and Liberia are given as two examples of anarchic state reflecting the most problematic type for Gros. The second type is phantom (or mirage) state where there is a limited authority in certain areas of country. While oppression and atrocity are usual, the protection of leader, usually a despot, and his cronies is vital. The third is anaemic state which has two dimensions. Either insurgency groups seeking for authority in this type of failed state, or the failure comes from the backwardness of state structure, so state remains incapable to meet the needs of growing population. Also, there are loose ties between central and local government agents, which lead to high degree of arbitrariness in local level. The fourth type of failed state model proposed by Gros is the captured state where a strong central authority exists, but also there is high divergency among state's elites regarding governance. The groups of elites who are in power are not able to embrace all aspects of society. Gros points to Rwanda where a strong centralized authority had existed, but a genocidal conflict took place. Finally, the states being failed before the process of state formation, called as aborted states, constitute the fifth group. During transition to statehood from quasi-federation, these states become failed to control legitimate means of violence and have to fight against insurgency groups. Bosnia where an armed conflict took place in the early 1990s is given as an example of aborted states.

Gros is also aware of other functions and responsibilities of states like the delivery of a range services.[60] Therefore, it can be said that he focuses on both causes and consequences when he identifies failed states. However, as the way he identifies the five types of failed states explained above, he puts greater emphasis on the main

[59] Gros (1996).

[60] *Ibid.* p. 457.

characteristics of states provided in Weber's definition of statehood. That is, problems with the characteristics of Weberian statehood are associated with causes of failed states in Gros' analysis.

Rotberg, on the other hand, argues that "a decentralized method of delivering political (public) goods" to people living within boundaries of a country is the raison d'etre of nation-states.[61] He also identifies the failure of states as a process that is comprised of four stages: weak, failing (as a sub-category of weak state), failed, and collapsed. As a result, to him, the main criterion to assess and distinguish these types of states is to compare them with strong states on the basis of state performance.[62] Since the most critical political good is the provision of security as noted earlier, human security becomes the essence of the explanations for weak, failed, and collapsed states in Rotberg's analysis. While weak states are regarded as those harboring "ethnic, religious, linguistic, or other intercommunal tensions that have not yet thoroughly, become overtly violent", conflict and civil wars due to the same tensions are already unveiled in failed states. Since insurgency and armed groups fighting against the authority, the loss of control in peripheral territories after a while can be observed in failed states. In addition, in weak states, the provision of other political goods such as infrastructure, education, health care services, and economic situation deteriorated, or the quality of supply these goods is falling down. Yet, only the most essential political goods could be provided in failed states. People are pinning their hope on warlords for the crucial supplies. Ultimately, a failed state can no longer fulfill even its fundamental responsibilities.

Rotberg uses the term 'failing' as a sub-category of weakness. When states become weaker and goes towards failure, the term 'failing' is used for them. Here, the criteria to understand the deterioration in state functions is also state performance. Namely, weak states perform poorer, so they enter the process of failing. If the failing process could not be reversed, weak or failing states turn into failed states. Ultimately, in the

[61] Rotberg (2004: 2).

[62] *Ibid.*

case of continuance of the deterioration, the collapsed states, which are "rare and extreme version of failed states," come out.[63] Rotberg makes an analogy between a collapsed state and black hole in terms of the loss of authority. Eventually, according to him, people living within the boundaries of a collapsed state are no longer called as citizens, but the inhabitants of a certain location or geography.

Likewise, by using Weberian definition of state, Zartman explains that states collapse because they no longer perform their basic functions.[64] He argues that the collapse of states results in destruction of good governance, law and order, and so local groups gain power and even legitimacy.[65] To him, power vacuum and internal disturbance followed the overthrowing of regimes by opposition groups in Africa after 1980s created poorly functioning governments which could not exercise their power effectively and legitimately.

Unlike Rotberg and Gros, Helman and Ratner was categorizing the states whose survival is at risk in three groups in the beginning of 1990s: failed states like Bosnia, Cambodia, Liberia, and Somalia; failing states like Ethiopia, Georgia, and Zaire; and newly independent states which were established after the collapse of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union.[66] As they had doubts about viability of the last group and did not expect a collapse within several years for the second group, failed states are defined as those whose governmental structures had been scrunched due to difficult circumstances and disstressed time they were going through.

Helman and Ratner discuss internal causes of state failure just as what Rotberg and Zartman mainly argue. It is expressed that failed states are failed because of the internal dynamics such as internal chaos, breakdown of state institutions, and economic depression. Also, consequences of failed states for the international

[63] Rotberg (2004: 9).

[64] Zartman (1995: 5).

[65] *Ibid*., p. 6.

[66] Helman and Ratner (1992 - 93).

community are emphasized since they include threats for neighboring states such as refugee flows. Thus, a failed state is regarded as "utterly incapable of sustaining itself as a member of the international community." In this sense, failed states can be considered as what leads to "the coming anarchy", which is the notion used by Robert Kaplan to elucidate demographic, environmental, and social troubles in Africa that caused variety of problems including refugee migration and erosion of international borders.[67]

In addition, not only scholars, but also some institutions and organizations including non-governmental organizations have attempted to define and explain failed states. The Fragile States Index, which is formerly known as the Failed States Index and published by the Fund for Peace,[68] defines the characteristics of fragility on a Weberian sense and has a similar resonance with the definitions of the scholars previously mentioned: "the loss of physical control of its territory or a monopoly on the legitimate use of force, the erosion of legitimate authority to make collective decisions, an inability to provide reasonable public services, the inability to interact with other states as a full member of the international community."[69]

On the other hand, the State Failure Task Force Project (SFTF), which is currently known as the Political Instability Task Force, does not use performance, functions, or characteristics of states, but instead, it defines state failure in terms of serious

[67] Robert Kaplan, "The Coming Anarchy", The Athlantic, February 1994, accessed 3 March 2017, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/1994/02/the-coming-anarchy/304670/.

[68] The Failed State Index was first published in 2005, and renamed as Fragile States Index. However, the characteristics of failed states presented on the website are used fort he fragile states without undergoing a change. In addition, the Fragile States Index uses 12 social, economic, and political indicators of pressure (with over 100 sub-indicators) on the state which include demographic pressures, refugees and internally displaced persons, uneven economic development, poverty and economic decline, state legitimacy, public services, security, human rights, and external intervention. Fragile State Index 2016 assesses 178 countries.

[69] "What does 'State Fragility' Mean", The Fragile States Index: Frequently Asked Questions, The Fund For Peace, accessed 2 March 2017, http://fsi.fundforpeace.org/faq-06-state-fragility.

consequences.[70] According to narrow definition of state failure by the SFTF, state becomes dysfunctional and central state authority collapses after severe political events.[71] These events are categorized in four groups: revolutionary wars that are defined as the violent conflict between governments and its "politically organized challengers" acting to overthrow government and its leaders; ethnic wars in which ethnic, religious, and other minorities challenge government that lead major changes in ongoing status quo; adverse regime change includes sudden and major changes in governance such as state collapse or severe regime shift from democracy to authoritarianism; and finally genocides and politicides that cause a high number of deaths from a certain community and group targeted by state.[72] As it is explicitly highlighted, violence becomes the central criteria in these state failure types. Also, the events explained in SFTF reports occur in short term instead of the developments with long historical backgrounds.

At the first glance on the literature, failed states are usually defined and analyzed on the basis of internal causes that adversely affect functions and performance of state institutions, their duties and responsibilities. Also, failed states are identified and categorized depending on the consequences derived from internal causes. Moreover, some external reasons underlying state failure in the long run are also considered in deeper historical and case analyses. For instance, a high degree-involvement of the USA and USSR in some Third World countries during the Cold War is argued as one major source of instability and disorder at both national and international level due to the arm transfers to both central authority and opposed groups in these countries.

[70] The State Failure Task Force was established by the U.S. government in 1994 and funded by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) to develop a global forecasting model of state failure. The Task Force Reports which were made by a group of scholars and experts of political conflict attempted to analyze state failure events starting from 1955, and a vast set of data has been provided.

[71] State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings, 30 September 2000, accessed 2 March 2017, https://www.hks.harvard.edu/fs/pnorris/Acrobat/stm103%20articles/StateFailureReport.pdf.

[72] *Ibid.*

Hence, they were influenced negatively because of the competition between the superpowers in their state-making processes of post-colonial period.[73] As a result, since an effective governance mechanism could not have been established, the quasi-states in the Third World - the term used by Robert Jackson - transformed into failed states at the end of the Cold War.[74] This is why Ayoob claims that in terms of human tragedy, living in a failed state is worse than being repressed by autocratic but functioning states as he defines failed states as those "juridically sovereign but empirically non-functioning central authority."[75]

In fine, the literature on failed state points out many factors as the indicators of failure. Adopting from the characteristics of statehood explained by Weber, failed states are usually thought as those which do not have monopoly over the means of physical force (or violence) and are not able to exercise their authority and control in whole territories, especially in peripheral regions. It is mostly because of the existence of insurgent groups seeking for power against central authority. Ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences could make a conflict more complicated, and a civil war, revolution, and military coups probably could take place. As a result, although secuirty is considered as the most critical good by Rotberg, failed states could not provide security to its all citizens.[76]

Because of the weak central government that cannot exercise power in its whole territory and the civil conflict within its borders; failed states pose threats for international system as well. As failed states are fertile ground for terrorism, they are also safe harbor for the illegal activities including drug trafficking, money laundering, and piracy. Moreover, refugee flows into neighboring countries create vital problems for both refugees and international community. As a result of these

[73] Ayoob (1996: 80 - 81).

[74] *Ibid.*

[75] *Ibid.*

[76] Rotberg (2004: 3).

problems, an outside intervention is legitimized easily. This is why it is argued that the threats coming from failed states may end up the conventional Westphalian world vision that encourages the principles of sovereignty, territoriality of states, and non-intervention.[77]

Next, bureaucratic structure and state institutions are weak and even do not exist in peripheral locations of failed states. As a result of that, scope of state activities is narrow, and state functions ineffectively. Since capacity and capabilities of state institutions are restricted due to tough conditions, it is almost unable for a failed state to carry on its main duties and responsibilities such as providing public goods, security, judiciary system, infrastructure, health care, basic education, etc.

The absence or poor performance of rule of law, security, and social order affect legitimacy of government adversely. Since the authority of state is not recognized in such a disaster situation, which is virtually what makes a state failed, warlords and insurgent groups attempt to gain legitimacy by providing security and order to a certain degree. The lack of rule of law paves the way for an increase in authoritarianism and oppression of people by both government and insurgent groups in the areas they control. In these circumstances, criminal activities rise up, and civil rights and civil society weaken or disappear. As it is observed in many failed state cases, legitimacy of government or of rulers is deeply bound up with the stability within country.

Finally, economic depression, underdevelopment, disconnection from global economy, and corruption are all characteristics of failed states. Unfair and uneven distribution of income, high inflation and low gross domestic product (GDP) rate per capita leave people vulnerable and insecure from the economic aspect.[78] Capital flow to the pockets of cronies is the most common form of corruption. Food shortages and

[77] Edward Newman, "Failed States and International Order: Constructing a Post-Westphalian World", *Contemporary Security Policy* 30, No. 3 (2009): 421 – 443. DOI: 10.1080/13523260903326479.

[78] Rotberg (2004: 8).

starvation are endemic to failed states.[79] As it is argued, economic conditions have impact on political and social events such as government instability and violence, which is what many empirical researches found out.[80]

2.3. Critique and Evaluation of the Literature

The term 'failed state' received many critiquess due to ontological, methodological and ethical shortcomings. The ambiguity and broadness of the concept, utilization and manipulation of its meaning for political reasons, and empirical problems reflect the main challenges. Some scholars have attempted to group the main critiques and concerns on failed state literature.[81] When the all complaints about failed state literature are approached in a holistic manner, as Ezrow and Frantz argue, it is seen that the key underlying point of critiques is the lack of "specifity" of the concept.[82]

As it is mentioned in the last paragraph of the first section, the usage of a wide range of concepts by different scholars to explain the weaknesses and some other similar characteristics of certain states explicitly demonstrates the ambiguity in the literature on failed states. This ambiguity has to do with how the phenomenon of failed state is defined and explained. That is, on the one hand, different scholars use different concepts such as weak, failed, failing, dysfunctional, quasi, fragile, collapsed and so on. On the other hand, even if some scholars use the same concept, the way they define and the measures they use have differences.

Not only the variety of concepts but also the measures and indicators which are used by both scholars and organizations to explain a failed state exacerbate this ambiguity in the literature. Also, the factors that are considered as indicators of state failure change from one scholar or organization to another. That is, while some scholars and

[79] *Ibid.,* p. 9.

[80] Carment (2003: 412).

[81] See Ezrow and Frantz (2013: 31 - 38), Hagmann and Hoehne (2009).

[82] Ezrow and Frantz (2013: 31).

organizations prioritize causes (external or internal reasons) of failed states,[83] some others focus on consequences of the failure,[84] and some others apply both causes and consequences[85] when they attempt to define and explain the phenomenon. Even, some scholars apply their own state failure model.[86] Moreover, ideology and context have influence on definition and explanation of the concept.[87] Therefore, numerous definitions and explanations of failed state are inevitable. As a result, while a state is involved in a group of failed states according to a definition of one scholar, it is not failed (at least not yet) according to another definition from another scholar. In this regard, for instance, Charles Call criticizes the concept 'failing states' used by Rotberg (2003) and asks the question that how a diverse range of states like Indonesia, North Korea, Ivory Coast which have many distinct aspects from each other can be classified in the same category.[88] Eventually, one can draw the inference that neither all state fails in the same way nor all failures are seen from the same vantage point.

In addition, state failure is measured with either quantitative or qualitative methods. As Rotberg has a qualitative approach to measure state failure, most of the index studies formed by development organizations such as Fragile States Index prepared by the Fund for Peace, have a quantitative approach. Especially for those using quantitative measurement methods, the number of indicators to measure state failure

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[83] See Zartman (1995), Ayoob (1996), Carment (2003), Rotberg (2004).

[84] See State Failure Task Force Report: Phase III Findings, 2000.

[85] See Gros (1996).

[86] See Howard (2010).

[87] Here, the ideology is referred to the debate on the connection between colonial background and failed characteristic of state, or the view accepting failed state discourse as a tool in the U.S. foreign policy. The context is referred to the sudden change in handling the concept just as how how it is regarded after the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001.

[88] Call (2008).

is also problematic since it is too broad. For instance, while some development organizations measure state failure by using one single digit figure of indicators, some others use over hundred indicators to explain the phenomenon. As it is mentioned earlier, for instance, the Fragile States Index uses 12 social, economic, and political indicators of pressure with over 100 sub-indicators. For this reason, according to Ezrow and Frantz, the large spectrum of indicators affects researchers and those working in policy community in negative ways. They state that a wide array of indicators reduces the number of outcomes on which researches can conduct since many of them are used in measurement, and makes it difficult to determine policy suggestions.[89]

The concept of failed state is problematic because there are also normative concerns about it. The literature of failed state often attributes the failure to internal problems. Causes of failed states are often seen as weak institutions, ethnical, secterian and linguistic tensions, corruption, poverty, authoritarianism, etc., which are internal causes. However, not touching on external causes inevitably leads to the debate "blaming the victim".[90] For example, Rotberg applies only internal dynamics such as corrupt rulers, bad governance, and mismanagement of economy.[91] As discussed in the second section of this chapter, Gros, Zartman and Carment have also a similar point of view. However, in postcolonial studies particularly, it is concluded that fastening the blame on the people of failed states does not whitewash the former colonialists and the founders of the present world order. Since the argument 'blaming the victim' suggests that reasons of failure are embedded in state itself, Khor discusses that blaming countries themselves for the failure is actually legitimizing outsiders' interventions: "the expanded theory of the failed state not only puts the blame onto the country concerned, but also opens a way of political and even

[89] Ezrow and Frantz (2013: 37).

[90] Jones (2001), Gros (1996: 465).

[91] Rotberg (2003: 19 - 24).

military interventions in many countries."[92]

The debate of "blaming the victim" triggers other ethical concerns as well. As it is mentioned in the first section of this chapter, the perception of failed state in the West is an underdeveloped state that has internal conflict, accommodates arms and drug trafficking, and cannot provide essential services to its citizens. Moreover, especially after the terror attack of the 9/11 in 2001, failed states have been regarded as "safe havens" for terrorist groups. While those terrorist groups form security gap in a global sense, neighboring countries witness flow of refugees into their lands, which led many domestic problems there as well.[93] That is why Ignatieff says: "Failed states are more than problems for themselves."[94] Therefore, as it is concluded in previous paragraph, the reasons of failure are mostly seen as internal in a significant part of the literature. Also, as the Western perception of failed states legitimizes military interventions and state building attempts, the discourses of "white man's burden" and "orientalism" also revived around failed state discussions.[95] That is, an analogy between the views of failed state analysts and the European colonizers in nineteenth and twentieth centuries can be drawn. The notion of 'white man's burden' was used to give a moral base to imperial conquests in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[96] Also, drawing on insights taken from Said's book, *Orientalism*, it can be said that while orientalist vantage point represents the "East" as the "other" which is undeveloped, owning brutal life conditions, and ruled by irrational leaders, the "West" is superior since it is developed (not only economically but also culturally and intellectually), having a rational society and

[92] Martin Khor, "'Failed states' theory can cause global anarchy", Daily News, 8 April 2002, accessed 16 February 2017, http://archives.dailynews.lk/2002/04/08/fea04.html.

[93] Iqbal and Starr (2008).

[94] Ignatieff (2002: 115).

[95] Jones (2001), Sune (2012: 82 - 87).

[96] "The White Man's Burden" is originally a name of poet written by Rudyard Kipling about the Philippine – American War in 1899. However, it has been interpreted to justify colonial progress of American and British Empire in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

rulers living in a peaceful environment.[97] Likewise, it can be inferred that while Western states perceive themselves as "successful states", they define the other as "failed state" which needs to be fixed by outer patron for the sake of global security and order.

The prevalent perception of failed states in the West is criticized because it is thought that labeling some states as "failed" is based on a comparison with Western European states and North America.[98] With regard to African states, Hill points to this comparison. He argues that those who analyze failed states attributes negative characteristics to African societies comparing to Western societies by calling them failed, weak, quasi, and collapsed state.[99] Thus, he concludes that to not consider African states as imperfect representations of West European and North America states, these terms need to be abandoned.[100]

[97] Said (1995).

[98] Hill (2005: 140).

[99] *Ibid*., p. 139, 140.

[100] *Ibid.,* p. 151.

CHAPTER 3

NON-STATE ACTORS AND FORMATIONS IN THE MIDST OF CONFLICTS AND CIVIL WARS

Based on the most extreme characteristics as it is discussed in the first chapter, a presumed failed state has no monopoly over legitimate means of violence, suffers from a conflict or civil war undermining state authority and regime (civil wars could occur among different ethnic, religious, or ideological communities as well), relinquishes control over some parts of its recognized territory, and accommodates terrorist and criminal groups apart from insurgent groups. In the meantime, state institutions are no longer able to operate and fundamental political goods such as security, rule of law, and a running economic environment cannot be provided. In this regard, there is two critical questions: when a state starts to lose its functions and the main institutions become inoperative in some regions of a country, how people living in these regions move on their lives, get protection, acquire their basic needs, and respond to their collective problems? Furthermore, which actors fill the authority and administrative gap, and how?

When a state is no longer functional, arisen sub-state actors and alternative governance structures get more attention. In the case of long-lasting state dysfunctionality, the most important state institutions such as security and legal system are demolished, and the concepts promoted by state like national identity and citizenship become meaningless.[101] Particularly in the case of civil war, when national identity is eroded, people turn back to their ethnical, clan or tribal, and religious or sectarian identities, which are more tangible to move on their lives and

[101] Bacık (2015: 145).

protect themselves.[102] That is, citizens come together in clusters based on their ethnical and sectarian backgrounds, and this separation becomes increasingly sharper. As a result, social fabric of society is affected negatively. Therefore, people start to establish informal political structures and governance systems at local level and usually on the basis of traditional orders.

On the other hand, except for global and regional states, which are usually interfering somehow in dysfuntional states, a wide range of other actors is observed in the zone of such states as well. These actors either come from outside or take form within country. In the zone of a presumed failed state in which state institutions do not operate in some parts of country, and conflict or civil war exists, all these actors establish complex relations with each other. First of all, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) such as the United Nations (UN) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), or the European Union (EU) as a supranational entity are likely to interfere in failed states, especially where the possibility of civil war exists, in order to maintain internal and external peace and security.

The second group is civil society organizations (CSOs) that involve a broad range of civil actors from various structural levels and play crucial roles in the areas where functions of state institutions ceased. Particularly, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) which are transnational actors following development and humanitarian aims in general like Save the Children, Care International, and International Rescue Committee. They can be analyzed as international NGOs (INGOs) and local NGOs. In the countries where state institutions fail to fulfill their functions well, and the neighboring countries where usually face refugee inflows, NGOs play a vital role in international aid and development activities. Also being recognized by the UN makes NGOs more legitimate in the countries where they are active. However, while being funded by donors, it is hard for NGOs to determine their priorities and agendas by themselves. Thus, NGOs are often criticized due to their dependence on donors that

[102] *Ibid.,* p. 147, 148.

weakens their link with community.[103]

Moreover, since NGOs are not the sole dimension of civil society organizations, grassroots movements and organizations are likely to arise at local level. While NGOs are funded by donors, and thus sometimes blamed for being political; grassroots movements are supposed to be more independent and closer to community. This feature of grassroots movements consolidates their legitimacy as well. They are spontaneous movements and can quickly spread to nearby towns and provinces, so they can even appear throughout country after a while. Contextual factors during violent conflicts and civil wars lead grassroots movements to grow or shrink. Grassroots organizations are established when the demand for political change motivates people to come together and offer creative and inspiring solutions to the problems they face in a way from bottom to top.

It should not be forgotten that terrorists groups, warlords, drug cartels and mafia organizations are considered as sub-state and non-state actors as well and grow up expeditiously due to the void of state authority, social stress, and economic decline in the territories of dysfunctional states. Despite their killing, rape, torture, looting, racketeering, and kidnapping activities these criminal organizations even gain a legitimate ground to a certain extent because of conflict or civil war conditions. For instance, Al-Qaeda and Al-Shabaab are the terrorist organizations that have taken the advantage of fertile grounds provided by Afghanistan and Somalia respectively, which are presumed as failed state. However, they are not included in the category of civil society simply because they are not regarded as "civil" and do not seek for peace, order and reconstruction.

Lastly, it is important to emphasize that the literatures on state building, development, and peacebuilding during conflicts and civil wars do not put a satisfactory emphasis on the roles and functions of civil society organizations and

[103] Fateh Azzam, "NGOs vs. Grassroots Movements: A False Dichotomy", Alshabaka, accessed 24 May 2017, https://al-shabaka.org/commentaries/ngos-vs-grassroots-movements-a-false-dichotomy/.

local governance structures. Many research handle these issues at the post-conflict periods when state building and reconstruction of state institutions gain momentum. However, this chapter put emphasis on the roles and functions of sub-state actors and non-state groups such as civil society organizations including NGOs and grassroots movements, and emergence of informal local political structures in a country that suffer from authority gap due to state dysfunctionality and witness competing factions in the midst of conflict and civil war. By doing so, the strengthes and weaknesses of both civil society organizations and informal local political structures are implied. When it comes to informal local governance formations, brief examples are provided from the cases of Chiapas and Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia in their hardest times when conflict and civil war existed in these regions.

3.1. Civil Society Organizations in Dysfunctional States

The definition and explanation of the concept 'civil society' is also complex just like failed state discussed in the previous chapter. Kaldor defines civil society as "the process through which individuals negotiate, argue and struggle against or agree with each other and with the centres of political and economic authority."[104] In general, civil society includes non-governmental organizations, grassroots organizations, media, faith-based charities and foundations, women and youth organizations, independent education and research institutions, local business groups, labor unions, environmental groups, diaspora groups, and not all, but many other non-state and sub-state actors. Because of this diversity, in the literature, the forms of civil society are analyzed according to either actors' identity or functions of civil society organizations.[105] In this regard, Paffenholz and Spurk claim that the support for CSOs needs to consider the "composition and characteristics of civil society in specific country context and specific functions of civil society".[106]

[104] Kaldor (2003: 585).

[105] Paffenholz and Spurk (2006).

[106] *Ibid.*

In general, the functions of civil society organizations include protesting, lobbying, researching, training, mediation, service delivery, and protection of people in the time of humanitarian crisis and disaster, violation of human rights, and environmental issues.[107] Namely, they work in the areas such as development, education, aid, democracy, religion, communication, and so on. Even, together with the increase in UN peacebuilding activities since the early 1990s, including the cases of Somalia and Rwanda, the roles of civil society actors, especially of NGOs, have augmented as well because it had been well understood that peace could be hardly achieved if it comes from above or outside.[108] Since collaboration and cooperation with local actors are an inimitable source of legitimacy, international NGOs (INGOs) are usually working with local actors and supporting local organizations in terms of humanitarian and developmental activities. Also, according to "liberal peace" approach,[109] civil society organizations become quite practical for promoting democracy through their relations with local actors on the basis of funding.[110] In this way, it is supposed that local actors and structures are organized according to liberal and democratic principles.[111] For instance, being accountable and holding elections to select their representative bodies are required for local actors including local civil

[107] Dudouet (2007: 11).

[108] Orjuela (2008: 24).

[109] After the end of the Cold War, the approach which does not only aim to end the war and somehow bring the peace, but also aims to create consistent peaceful environment in the civil war-torned state through building modern democratic state institutions, the rule of law, liberal market economy have become dominant in peacebuilding and statebuilding agendas (Campbell et al. 2011: 1). This approached is called as "liberal peace" in the literature. The aim of international operations in the Yudoslavia, Sierra Leone, Haiti in 1990s and more recently Afghanistan in 2002 was to create peace through forming liberal governments in these regions (Zürcher 2011: 70). It is mainly criticized for creating modern states from top to bottom based on Western perception and through military interventions, ignoring indigenous values and identities, and being a new version of colonialism. While there is not only one single form of liberal peace approach, in the form of bottom-up peacebuilding processes, the international institutions such as the UN agencies like UNDP and UNHCR, the World Bank, or World Trade Organization (WTO) play substantial roles (Richmond 2005: 127).

[110] Richmond (2005: 127, 128).

[111] Fischer (2011: 298).

society groups to get benefit from the fund provided by donors through the links formed mainly by NGOs.

However, since the existing context has impact on the number, scope, functions, and effectiveness of civil society organizations; their roles need to be analyzed during conflicts and civil wars. The conditions of civil war, violent conflict, and the demise of state do not yield advantages to civil society except for the emergence of new civil society initiatives at local level.[112] However, even the emergence of local civil society agents is highly dependent on security to a certain extent. In the case of any failed state where a civil war exists and government cannot control all parts of its territory, first of all, the security of CSOs is at risk. Thus, NGOs are reluctant to intervene in the humanitarian crisis inside that country, and new civil organizations hardly emerge at the risk of their security in local base. For example, from 1977 to 1991, there were three conflicts in Somalia that are the war with Ethiopia (1977 - 78), the civil war between military and Somalia National Movement (SNM) over the control of Northwestern region, and the internal conflict between military and liberation movements (1989 - 1990).[113] The President of Somalia, Siad Barre, was overthrown in 1991. Nevertheless, the succor of a large number of NGOs to Somalia was not before the end of 1992, when the United Nations peacekeeping operation began. According to official records, there were only 18 NGOs in Somalia in 1988 while the number had dramatically increased to 940 between 1992 and 1995.[114] Also, in Somaliland, which was seeking for independence, there were only 4 NGOs in 1992 compared to 493 in 1998.[115]

The circumstances in the midst of conflict and civil war pose many other serious challenges for civil society organizations. First of all, there is no any legal

[112] Dudouet (2007: 24).

[113] New World Encyclopedia, Somali Civil War http://www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Somali_Civil_War.

[114] Perouse de Montclos (2005: 292).

[115] *Ibid.*

framework that they can act in accordance with, and no state institutions that they can work together and get help when it is required.[116] The infrastructure that enable them to communicate with other civil society groups and governments, carry out banking transactions and access to services and other regions are ruined by armed conflicts. Moreover, one of the most critical challenges is that armed conflicts do not let ordinary people to mobilize and appear in public sphere.[117] Since violence produce fear and insecure environment, people are discouraged to participate in civil society and voluntary activities.[118] In such a disaster situation, it is also hard for civil society organizations to establish trustable relations with local people and include them into their voluntary activities. Therefore, particularly INGOs hardly find space to be organized independently, and it ends up with decrease in the activity scope of INGOs and many other CSOs.[119] Last but not least, one of the main challenge civil society organizations face due to armed conflicts is the sudden changes in power relations and the dramatic outcomes of these changes in social and economic life at local and regional levels.[120] Eventually, the conditions that are required for civil society organizations in order to work efficiently are annihilated by armed groups.[121]

As it is mentioned earlier, in the long-term state building, development, and post-conflict peacebuilding literature, there is a great emphasis on the role and functions of civil society actors, but the same topic is relatively less researched if it is in the midst of war. Some of the reasons behind this include the security gap in the field, unlikely access to adequate and confidential data, and sudden changes that occur in the all aspects of life in conflict zone including the sudden shifts in balance of powers among armed factions and the emergence and disappearance of actors,

[116] See Ahmed and Herbold Green (1999).

[117] Dudouet (2007: 24).

[118] *Ibid.*, Pearce (2004: 11).

[119] Paffenholz and Spurk (2006: 11).

[120] *Ibid.*

[121] See Ahmed and Herbold Green (1999).

structures, and organizations. Therefore, the works of Paffenholz and Spurk, and Dudouet are substantial since they attempt to figure out the roles and functions of CSOs during conflict within peacebuilding theory. According to Paffenholz and Spurk, the functions such as protection, monitoring, and public communication have priority because these functions are effective during armed conflicts.[122] Also, Dudouet explains these three functions of CSOs in wartimes.[123] The First function is to balance the power of state authorities. Due to armed conflicts, state cannot carry out its responsibility of protection. Even, state itself may commit crimes and abuse human rights in the midst of war. Thus, civil society actors shoulder the duties of human rights monitoring and protection by calling for non-armed zones. Secondly, if violent and repressive circumstances allow, CSOs mobilize people to protest against violence and human rights abuses committed by government and non-state armed groups. Mobilizing people can also be for demanding peace. However, Dudouet agree with Paffenholz and Spurk that mobilizing people for a long time is quite difficult because the first objective of people is to meet their basic needs in the midst of war. The Third function is to open communication channels and collaboration with the sides of conflict on behalf of vulnerable groups. Even though they have less chance to use back-channel communication or lobbying activities between the sides of conflict, CSOs may be influential to a certain degree dependent on their proximity and relations with the conflicting groups in the field. In addition to these, it is often mentioned that the provision of basic services such as humanitarian relief, livelihoods, safe water, health and nutrition, education, shelter, and so on are the most important duties of CSOs in the areas where state institutions failed to meet these needs because of the violent conflict and civil war.[124]

Notwithstanding, not only the existence of an armed conflict or civil war and cease of state institutions restrict the roles and functions of civil society organizations, but

[122] Paffenholz and Spurk (2006: 12 - 14).

[123] Dudouet (2007: 25 - 27).

[124] Dudouet (2007: 27).

also the problems that originate from their operations have a negative impact on humanitarian efforts on the ground. Two main examples of these problems are the unsatisfactory relations at the triangle of donor agencies, INGOs and local NGOs; and the unintended consequences of humanitarian aid delivery in the midst of violent conflict and civil war.

The relationship between International non-governmental organizations and donor agencies, mostly western ones, is strong and intensive since it is easier to establish mutual trust and cooperation among themselves as long as INGOs maintain donors' interests.[125] INGOs usually have the required capacity to meet donors' expectations while local NGOs have often difficulty to meet these demands. Particularly, when there is an ethnic civil war, and people in society are polarized; international donors are unlikely to contact those local actors. Also, donors may focus on only metropolitan areas and interact with only elite political groups and NGOs in the country, so they may not observe and understand the realities at local level.[126] Therefore, while donors do not have adequate information about identity and functions of local NGOs and do not make a serious effort to know them, it is easier for them to work with INGOs and other international civil society groups, especially those who share the same values and culture. However, since many INGOs do not know much about local values and culture, which may differ from Western ones, they need to cooperate with national and local NGOs.[127] Nevertheless, the level of coordination and cooperation is low when there are a plenty of INGOs and local NGOs that have different agendas and policy settings, and also speak different languages.

Secondly, the issue of aid provided by donors through civil society organizations, especially NGOs, is controversial since it may cause to unintended consequences. It

[125] Christie (2013: 58).

[126] Mac Ginty, Roger (2011: 214).

[127] Mac Ginty, Roger (2010: 347 - 362).

is discussed that aid can also fuel the conflict and social fragmentation on the basis of ethnical and religious differences. In this regard, Mary Anderson's analysis shows how aid can be harmful and reinforce conflict.[128] If aid is perceived or somehow theft by armed groups, the conflict is fostered and prolonged, and also warlords are strengthened. Therefore, the perception would be like one party of the conflict, which is "enemy" for the other or others, is funded and favored through aid. In this case, a dilemma takes place that while the party which gets aid becomes more legitimate, the NGOs and civil society organizations which deliver aid to this party loses legitimacy.

In this regard, the fundamental aid principles such as neutrality and impartiality need to be reminded. In an ideal aid plan to respond to humanitarian crises, aid delivery is supposed to be regardless of political, ethnical and religious constraints. Since many international donors would like to remain or seem neutral, the ideology and political interests of local NGOs makes them reluctant to fund "tamed" activities of these groups.[129] However, it is not a secret that many local CSOs and NGOs funded by diaspora groups have politically-oriented agendas and take decisions strategically. Also, various local CSOs and NGOs that are seem apolitical, actually support one side in conflicts, but hide this fact to get more fund from various donors. Therefore, the origin and identity of CSOs and NGOs, especially local ones, are significant. Corruption and clientelism, which are often attributed to features of failed states, can be also the characteristics of some CSOs.[130] Thit is the main reason behind the transgression of humanitarian aid principles.

Consequently, the challenges civil society organizations face in the midst of violent conflicts and civil wars in the case of failed states where functions of state institutions cease in the some parts of, or in the whole country, and additionally the

[128] Anderson (1999: 37 - 53).

[129] Leeuwen (2013: 207), Brouwer (2000: 32).

[130] Leeuwen (2013: 207).

problems originated from the operations of civil society organizations, NGOs in particular, cause a series of shortcomings such as a decrease in the number, effectiveness, legitimacy, scope of functions of civil society organizations. In this context, the role and functions of informal local political structures over governance to fill the administrative gap during state dysfunctionality is crucial and life-sustaining. Also, civil society actors including international and local NGOs need a governance structure to efficiently perform their functions on a legitimate base in the midst of violent conflicts and civil wars.

3.2. Local Governance Structures in Presumed 'Failed States'

In the countries where long-standing conflicts and wars take place, the emergence of some social movements and formations are likely to occur since the state institutions are not in a position that can provide security, other services, and implement the law. While ordinary people gather under their ethnical, tribal, and religious or sectarian identities; insurgent groups, warlords, gangster groups, and militia forces gain strength and break the monopoly of state over the use of violence. Beside these spoilers, there are also various local authorities including chiefs, religious leaders, traditional lords, elders, landlords, and headmen. These authorities and groups may show a changeability characteristic during a violent conflict and war. That is, a tribal (or local) leader can become a warlord, or a warlord can become a leader that seeks for a position in customary framework.[131] Also, as it is implied in this section, it is also a fact that particularly insurgent groups are likely to aim consolidating their authority and applying their own political agendas by involving in the formation of local governance systems.

The emergence of new orders, authority and governance structures in the zones of the states regarded as "failed" in the literature are discussed around the concepts such as hybrid political order, institutional multiplicity (or duality), parallel governance, split sovereignty, local governance, and governance without government. These

[131] Boege et al. (2009: 17).

forms of governance are sometimes based on customary and indigenous life practices. From this point of view, these structures contain a great source of legitimacy in itself since they are appreciated in terms of provision of security, customary law, and a wide range of services. Indeed, these authorities could form legitimate, sustainable and effective political order and governance structures to varying degrees. Notwithstanding, insurgent and militia groups also impose their own order and social norms in many other cases. In these cases, political and ideological motivations behind these governance structures are often accused of being what underpins social cohesion by serving the purpose of societal fragmentation that can be in ethnical, ideological, and religious forms. In this section, the notions of hybrid political order, institutional multiplicity, parallel governance, governance without government, rebeliocracy and aliocracy are explained and discussed based on the tangible examples from the experiences of Chiapas, Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia where conflict and civil wars devastated in the recent times. The de facto situation of split sovereignty is reflected in these cases.

First of all, hybrid political order[132] is defined as "the (often uneasy and vulnerable) coexistence of very different orders of governance and government."[133] Further, the conditions where hybrid political orders appear and their interaction site are explained as follows: "In the regions characterized by hybrid political orders, diverse, sometimes competing, sometimes complementary authority structures, logics of order and claims to power interact and pull against each other, combining elements of introduced Western models of governance and elements of stemming from local indigenous traditions of governance and politics, with further influences exerted by the forces of globalization and associated societal fragmentation (in

[132] Since the concepts like weak, fragile and failed state have notoriety in development and security literature, Boege et al. (2009) and Brown et al. (2010) suggest the usage of the concept 'hybrid political order'. While the former concepts emphasize on deficiencies and shortcomings, the latter one presents more positive image because it focus on strenght and resilience of new governance forms for the good of communities.

[133] Brown et al. (2010: 100).

various forms: ethnic, tribal, religious…)."[134] As it is explicit, the concept opens door to informal sub-state structures and their interactions with formal institutions, which goes beyond the state-centric understanding of international relations.[135]

Based on the field research in the regions of Pacific Island, East Timor and Somaliland, it is argued that the local governance performed by customary (non-Western) institutions and non-state actors includes the provision of security by the help of formal state forces in various extents, or in a way that they compete with state institutions.[136] Beside this, they provide basic social services, arrange land issues and prevent conflict at local level.[137] Civil society organizations, religious institutions in particular, can carry out health and education services under the hybrid political orders.[138] As a result, it is suggested to go beyond the state-centric view, and argued that traditional way of life underpins social order and peace through local societal forms of governance, so they have an important potential in terms of authority and legitimacy. Although these new forms pose a challenge for the Western state models that are usually implemented in the violence-torn regions as a crucial part of state building operations, they represent more flexible and richer governance model.[139] Therefore, it is thought that local governance structures can be an essential part of a broader national governance structure. That is, because of the co-existence or overlap of hybrid political orders and state institutions, state does not have the monopoly over security, welfare and representation, so authority and legitimacy need to be shared between them.[140] Nevertheless, in general, hybrid political orders are

[134] Quoted from Brown et al. (2010: 100).

[135] Mac Ginty (2011: 210).

[136] Brown et al. (2008: 103, 111, 112).

[137] Boege et al. (2008: 6).

[138] Boege et al. (2009: 19).

[139] Brown et al. (2010: 101).

[140] Boege et al. (2009: 17).

approached as a subsidiary, but not an alternative to a state.[141]

The concept 'hybrid political orders' is actually quite fit to the term 'institutional multiplicity', coined by DiJohn and defined as: "Institutional multiplicity is a situation in which different sets of rules of the game, often contradictory, coexist in the same territory, putting citizens and economic agents in complex, often unsolvable situations, but at the same time offering them the possibility of switching strategically from one institutional universe to another."[142] The term is applicable to the places where non-state groups take control of some regions and implement their own governance mechanisms including the functions such as security, tax regulations, appointments, hierarchical decision-making bodies, ad hoc judicial courts in traditional forms, and so on. These non-state groups either cooperate or compete with state institutions. Not only non-state groups, but also outsiders including the UN peacekeeping force, NATO members, any coalition composed by a group of states, and a variety of social movements and civil society organizations, particularly INGOs, implement rules and form administrative structures as well following a military and humanitarian intervention. Therefore, the main difference between institutional multiplicity and hybrid political orders is that institutional multiplicity goes beyond both formal government and customary governance structures.[143] Thus, the governance performed by NGOs and insurgent groups is pointed out as well.

As a form of institutional multiplicity, the concept 'parallel governance' is defined as the existence of at least one more different set of governance institution that provides similar services just like state institutions and controlling a territory, but has a different political agenda and usually compete with state and other rivals.[144] Hence, it

[141] Brown et al. (2010: 101).

[142] DiJohn (2008: 33).

[143] Van der Haar and Heijke (2013: 99).

[144] Van der Borgh (2012: 32), Van der Haar and Heijke (2013: 97).

is attempted to mitigate local needs and conduct political agendas simultaneously. The political agenda can be in the form of resistance against state, which is seen as illegitimate, so the parallel governance structures are established to counteract state institutions. Two examples of parallel governance are Chiapas, Mexico and Kosovo where long standing-conflicts have taken place, and the situation what Richards calls as "no peace no war" existed.[145] Both Zapatistas in Chiapas and Serbs in Kosovo represent the forms of "split sovereignty."[146]

In Chiapas, located in eastern Mexico, indigenous people insisted on democratic, ethnic, and cultural rights demanded from the Mexican state and criticized the despotic and unjust practices of the state in the region. For this reason, a rebellion movement, known as "Zapatista uprising" started in 1994. The Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) declared autonomous municipalities. After a series of conflicts between the EZLN and state, an unsuccessful peace process had taken place, and it ended in 1997. Later on, these municipalities gained strength in terms of legitimacy thanks to the ascending participation of civilians. The Zapatista parallel governance offered basic municipal services, operated the legal system, provided education and healthcare, and opened offices to deal with civil registry, land administration, and infrastructure.[147] In the meantime, a broad range of NGOs got in contact with these autonomous municipalities and supported them in various aspects. In addition, the autonomous governance structures were consolidated and strategically built on their culture and tradition that was thought as what would make easier to be internationally recognized as an indigenous autonomy.[148] The response of Mexican state to the parallel governance founded by Zapatistas was that the government strived to make state institutions and officials more visible by investing

[145] Richards (2005).

[146] Pula (2004), Van der Borgh (2012), Van der Haar and Heijke (2013).

[147] Van der Haar and Heijke (2013: 102, 103).

[148] Stahler-Sholk (2005), Van der Haar and Heijke (2013: 103).

infrastructure projects and implement social policies to support vulnerable people.[149] That is, the official state institutions continued to exist and function in the same regions, which illustrates a case of overlapping governance structures. Even though the EZLN did not recognized them, people who were in the side of government or did not want to be a part of this separation continued to use official state authorities.[150]

The second example of parallel governance form of institutional multiplicity was Kosovo. While Kosovo had been an autonomous province of Serbia in the Yugoslav Federation, its autonomous status was abolished under the Milosevic rule.[151] Throughout the 1990s, the governance mechanism of Albanian population in Kosovo comprised of the parliament, government, political parties, financial structure, education, healthcare, and tax system, and all other social and cultural facilities were seen as "parallel governance" from the vantage point of the Serbs.[152] After the violent ethnic conflicts, NATO intervened in Kosovo in 1999, and the Mandate of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission (UNMIK) was established. That is how Kosovo's autonomous status was protected by the NATO peacekeeping force (KFOR) and the UN mandate. Notwithstanding, the majority of population in northern part of Kosovo was composed of Serbs who have tied strongly to the government in Belgrade. After 1999, the Serb population of Kosovo started to establish their own parallel governance structures on the remnants of Serbian regime.[153] Even, after the independence of Kosovo in 2008, the Serbs in Kosovo refused being a part of the Republic of Kosovo. Instead, they regarded the Republic of Serbia as the legitimate government. The Serb parallel governance system includes municipalities, judicial authorities, security force, schools and healthcare

[149] Van der Haar and Heijke (2013: 103).

[150] *Ibid.,* p. 102.

[151] Paula (2004).

[152] See Paula (2004) and Van der Borgh (2012).

[153] Van der Borgh (2012).

system.[154] Just as in the case of Zapatistas in Chiapas, the Serb parallel structures help preserve the culture and tradition.[155] However, unlike those formed by Zapatistas, the parallel institutions of Serb population in Kosovo have been financially supported by the budget of ministries in Belgrade.[156]

On the other hand, in the literature, the informal structures established in Somalia are usually termed as 'governance without government'. Somalia has been handled as one of the most notorious cases of failed state due to the decades of civil war and state collapse in 1991. The central authority in Somalia has been uploading since the efforts started with the establishment of a transitional government in 2004. Ultimately, the new constitution in 2012 established the Federal Government of Somalia that is highly supported by international community and international organizations. Therefore, Somalia had represented an example of the situation 'governance without government' for years. That is, being without government does not mean being without governance. Somalian society started to create local political governance structures involving traditional authorities, business groups, and civic groups in the face of state failure.[157] Even though these informal structures were "fluid, patchy, variable in capacity and legitimacy, chronically contested, vulnerable to armed spoilers, and illiberal," they have achieved to survive and evolved over time.[158] In the midst of 1990s, the traditional authority with the leadership of clan elders and customary law based on sharia courts played vital roles to solve disputes and also to revive the business and economic environment. In order to provide security, local police forces were formed and sometimes teenage gunmen and some members of militia groups were hired for local security when required. In the post-1995, the interaction with civil society organizations and international aid agencies

[154] *Ibid.,* Van der Haar and Heijke (2013).

[155] Van der Haar and Heijke (2013).

[156] Van der Borgh (2012), Van der Haar and Heijke (2013).

[157] Menkhaus (2007: 74).

[158] Menkhaus (2014: 143, 144).

including international and local NGOs by the reason of shared interests, helped informal governance structures provide basic services, open schools, provide healthcare, organize fund-raising activities, and encourage women as entrepreneur. For the interest of local people, a collective work system was introduced to build roads and bridges. Later on, private business firms have competed to provide electricity, establish piped-water system, operate telecommunication system, provide main banking services, and collect garbage.[159] In the meantime, the structure and functions of informal governance systems advanced. Committees of clan elders, formal municipalities, regional and trans-regional authorities have emerged.[160] For instance, to manage the allocation of resources, employment, and regulation of prices, the committees of clan elders were established in some towns. Some municipalities were emerged and recognized by international donors, so they benefited from external funds for a variety of infrastructure projects. Moreover, some local governance structures turned into a formal regional autonomous state over time. The examples of regional autonomous government are Somaliland, which is located in the northwest of Somalia and seeks for independence since it has its own government, parliament, legal system and security force; and the northeastern region, Puntland, which does not have a secessionist strategy.[161]

However, since a strong national military was not existed, militia groups and warlords became dominant in governance domain and pursued a strategy to maximize their political power and economic gain in some regions. Such governance domains were questioned in terms of legitimacy. In addition, the spread of jihadist group, al-Shabaab, in the southern Somalia undermined the role of clan elders and local governance structures. Al-Shabaab imposed its own law and order that is

[159] Menkhaus (2014: 145); Conor Seyle, "Making Somalia Work: Governance Without Government", *Foreign Affairs*, 10 December 2015, accessed 3 July 2017, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-12-10/making-somalia-work.

[160] Mekhaus (2007: 83), Mekhaus (2014: 145, 146).

[161] Mekhaus (2014: 145, 146).

assessed as too repressive and strict.[162] Also, the rapid spread of al-Shabaab revealed that local governance structures have failed to combine their resources and manage a security force that could offer resistance against large-size terrorist groups due to the lack of coordination at national level.[163] Nevertheless, local authorities tended to be re-established in the regions taken from al-Shabaab by the African Union peacekeeping forces. Yet, what was observed in those regions was the reluctance of some local clan elders and authorities to cooperate with transitional government of Somalia, and also the competition and struggle among these clan authorities over resources and power could cause violent conflicts and even ethnic cleansing.[164] Thus, such problems are considered as a negative aspect of local governance structures in the case of Somalia because they pose a threat to the long-term statebuilding efforts.

Finally, the governance structures established by the guerilla group Fuerzas Armadas Revolucionarias de Colombia (FARC), The Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, and various paramilitary groups which were united under the name of Autodefensas Unidas de Colombia (AUC), United Self-Defense Organization of Colombia in 1997, need attention in the case of the prolonged civil conflict Colombia has experienced. After its establishment in 1964, together with the other leftist guerilla group, the National Liberation Army – Ejercito de Liberacion Nacional (ELN), FARC fought against right-wing paramilitary groups to have control over population and territory. For instance, it was estimated that 35 to 40 percent of the country's territory was controlled by the FARC.[165] In terms of gaining political and economical power, both guerilla and paramilitary groups needed to exercise more

[162] "Al-Shabaab Profile: A History of Somalia's Insurgent Movement," The Telegraph, 3 April 2015, http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/africaandindianocean/somalia/11513886/Al-Shabaab-profile-A-history-of-Somalias-insurgent-movement.html.

[163] Conor Seyle, "Making Somalia Work: Governance Without Government", *Foreign Affairs*, 10 December 2015, accessed 3 July 2017, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/2015-12-10/making-somalia-work.

[164] Mekhaus (2007: 85), Mekhaus (2014: 147).

[165] Paoli et al. (2009: 163).

influence over land, local leaders and inhabitants particularly when the government in Colombia was not able to manage a monopoly on the means of violence and provision of public goods.[166] Since one of the fundamental aims of guerilla groups is to undermine the state authority, they undertook the role of state institutions, provided public good and security, controlled population by intervening in community affairs, managed natural resources, levied taxes, and imposed new social norms in the areas under their control.[167]

While decentralization process in the mid-1980s in Colombia had raised the power and economic resources of local municipalities, for armed groups, creating good relations with community leaders and organizations became critical to fulfill political and economic objectives. Therefore, armed groups sought to penetrate local politics by influencing electoral results and forming strategic alliances with local leaders.[168] The territorial expansion of the armed groups during the 1990s did not change the need for an alliance with local people. The formation of an alliance was useful for local population as well since they could organize collective organizations to meet their basic needs, constitute coordination and support networks, and mobilize local people for political and economic reasons during the civil conflict.[169]

In this regard, since presence and behavior of armed groups have an impact on governance and administrative structure during conflicts and civil wars, Arjona, by noodling over the wartime institutions in the case of Colombia, suggests a typology that explains how different social orders emerge in war zones based on the relations between armed groups and local community.[170]

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[166] Sanchez and Del Mar Palau (2006).

[167] Gafaro et al. (2004).

[168] Sanchez and Del Mar Palau (2006).

[169] Gafaro et al. (2004).

[170] Arjona (2014).

Table 2. Arjona's typology of wartime social orders[171]

		Scope of armed groups' intervention in civilian affairs	
		Narrow	Broad
Social contract between armed groups and local population	Yes	Aliocracy	Rebelocracy
	No	Disorder	

In the places where no social contract exists between local community and armed groups, the situation of disorder takes place, which is explained with the existence of high levels of unpredictability and strict control over local population at the same time.[172] On the other hand, in the places where there is a social contract between armed groups and civilians, the level of intervention of armed groups in social affairs determine the form of governance that can be 'rebelocracy' or 'aliocracy'. Rebelocracy exists if armed groups broadly intervene in social affairs including political, economic, or even private sphere (such as interfering in religious practices and sexual life). In the cases where the size of intervention is narrow and limited to security and tax issues, then the form of social order is called 'aliocracy', where local people manage the other parts of public administration by themselves.

Moreover, it is argued that instead of aliocracy, armed groups prefer to establish rebelocracy to fulfill their long-term objectives in the area under their control.[173] When armed groups and local community share the same ideology, local people

[171] *Ibid.*, p. 26.

[172] Arjona uses the sociological definition of social order, which is "particular set of social norms that regulate the interaction among members of a given community." According to Arjona social order during civil wars depends on the existence of predictability of both civilians and combatants' behaviours and the norms that sustain it. Thus, rather than using the word 'chaos', the word 'disorder' is used to refer to the low predictability and cooperation between civilians and combatants. Moreover, the term 'social contract' is used to explain the implicit duties and commitments of armed groups and local people in a given community (Arjona: 2014).

[173] Arjona (2016: 101).

voluntarily act together with these armed groups to fulfill those objectives.[174] Otherwise, armed groups may apply more coercive methods like imposing their own order and leaders.[175] In addition, in the places where armed groups encounter collective resistance, they are prone to opt for aliocracy in order to maintain the control over territory. Yet, a successful collective resistance depends on the legitimacy and efficacy of former local institutions that native people count on.[176] In other words, in the places where native people are accustomed to make use of legitimate and effective institutions, the imposition of a new governance structure by rebel groups is not easily welcomed.

In general, the presence of armed groups is likely to discourage the formation of local organizations due to the fear atmosphere even though the level of control over local people is varied by time and place. Also, it must be borne in mind that the ideology, objectives and practices of guerilla groups and paramilitary groups were not the same in the case of Colombia in spite of similarities, so the relations of different armed groups with community members had differences naturally.[177] However, armed groups usually do not randomly target individuals during a conflict and civil war. Therefore, what is expected in any case is that nobody wants to be a target of an armed group just because of participating in collective activities, particularly those angering armed groups. Namely, the price of joining collective acticities may be the life of individuals during conflicts and civil wars. Interestingly, the case of Colombia partially shows that presence of armed groups affect the participation of residents in local collective organizations in a positive way. Even though the participation in decision-making process decreased, local people's attendance to political meetings increased and the salient role of women prevailed.[178]

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[174] Gafaro et al. (2014: 3).

[175] *Ibid.*

[176] Arjona (2016: 101).

[177] Arjona (2016).

[178] Gafaro et al. (2004).

However, it is also indicated that the increased participation was not resulted from the motive of resistance against armed groups. Instead, it was due to the ambition of armed groups to capture local organizations and tightening the control over the community.[179] Even, it is asserted that local people were marginalized from political organizations when armed groups imposed their own members for the leadership positions in organizations.[180] Moreover, as the case of Colombia is important since it demonstrates how armed groups transform local institutions in order to reach their own political objectives during conflicts and civil wars, it should not also be forgotten that strengthening local institutions is usually a priority in the post-war reconstruction period.

The notions like hybrid political order, institutional multiplicity and governance without government grant a perspective beyond state-centric approaches of international relations because these notions were designed as a result of analysis and examination of informal governance structures based on customary life practices, the practices of insurgent and militia groups, and the interactions between these informal structures and formal institutions. Unlike the informal governance structures directly administered by members of illegitimate armed groups or warlords who are exploiting local resources and population and involved in crimes; the local governance models, in which customary life practices are touched and civilians are dominant, are suggested to be placed in formal state mechanism. Hence, it is believed that considering civilian-based local governance structures as a threat that should be fought hinders the effective and legitimate outcomes of these structures in terms of peacebuilding and state building.[181] This is regarded as what discourages local communities to take responsibility for the solution of local problems. Furthermore, even if social forms are on the basis of kinship, they are suggested not to be considered as "sources of corruption and nepotism and hindrances of to

[179] *Ibid.*

[180] *Ibid.*

[181] Boege et al. (2009: 19).

accountability and transparency", but instead, to be handled as "valuable social support networks" which have their own checks and balances.[182] That is, a state mechanism embracing the combination of state institutions, customary non-state actors and their local institutions, and civil society organizations is discussed as more successful forms of governance and political order.[183] It is also thought that the imposition of Western state institutions on societies living in the other parts of the world will be restricted when a new state mechanism is established in so-called failed states by giving place to the indigenous governance elements.[184]

Nevertheless, in terms of statebuilding perspective, there are other three opinions regarding how local governance structures affect statebuilding endeavors.[185] The first view considers informal governance orders as "invisible" and "inconsequential" which have no effect on statebuilding programs. The second view handles those structures as a negative value since sub-state actors are regarded as "rivals to the state" that looks for preservation of their power against state authority. Moreover, unwritten and illiberal law mechanism of informal governance structures including elements from customary and sharia law are not seen proper and equitable compared to the legal systems in modern democratic states. Finally, the third view pays attention to the roles of informal governance because it provides crucial services like security and order based on the customary law. Yet, these structures are considered as temporary mechanisms that are active at pre-statebuilding phase.

Some other critical points can be deducted from the cases of Chiapas, Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia; and also from the overall literature over the local

[182] *Ibid.,* p. 20.

[183] *Ibid.*

[184] See Ahmed and Herbold Green (1999), Menkhaus (2014: 149).

[185] These views are mainly drawn from the literature over the case of Somalia by Menkhaus (2014: 148, 149). However, since these views can be attributed to many other cases, in fact, they reflect a general framework of statebuilding perspective regarding local governance structures during conflict and wartime in many other failed states.

governance structures during conflicts and civil wars. Before anything else, it should not be forgotten that not everybody is able to leave everything behind and flee from the country towards neighboring borders when a conflict or a civil war erupts. Local governance structures sustain everyday life during such rough times. These informal governance structures carry out crucial functions especially in the countries in the midst of civil wars and protracted conflicts just like Somalia. These functions can be varied according to time and place because of the reasons such as the level of security, fear of armed groups and available valuable natural resources. In general, the functions of local governance structures may include the provision of basic needs, security, a variety of infrastructure services, implementation of law based on customary practices, formation of a basis for social collective organizations, developing relationship with active armed groups in the region to procure a peaceful environment and stable conditions, and more importantly, the reduction of violence through institutional solutions to some certain extents, and so on. Moreover, the establishment of an order dilutes internal displacement, refugee flows to neighboring countries, and even it can be effective for refugee returns as well.

On the other hand, in the cases where local administrative structures are organic and based on grassroots movements, they enjoy a high level of legitimacy, which is vital to sustain a peaceful environment in society. The legitimacy of local governance structures are substantial to get aid from external donors and civil society organizations including relief agencies and NGOs particularly as these actors also need for a governance mechanism in the zones of the states whose functions ceased. Working with civil governance structures increases the legitimacy and effectiveness of those external organizations and provide a relatively secure and predictable environment. Also, working with external organizations help local governance structures to build their capacities and be more effective, efficient, and accountable since it is needed to follow some rules, principles and requirements to get aid from donors and civil society organizations. As this win-win relationship helps local governance structures to sustain their existence, the interaction also creates a mutual trust and strengthens cooperation on the ground.

The motivation behind the establishment of local governance structures may vary in each case. It can be due to local needs in the lack of state institutions, oppression of former regime, political-ideological objectives, or the mixture of all of these. As it is emphasized by Gros in the previous chapter; ethnic, religious and linguistic differences are not necessarily a reason of state failure when these heterogeneities are managed well and not abused by elites for their own political and economical gains. However, when a conflict and civil war erupt, these differences may fuel the conflict and corrode the social cohesion. In the context of local governance structures, two possible scenarios can occur, and the both is up to the standpoint of commentators. The first view is that local governance structures could be seen as protector of culture and tradition just as in the case of the parallel governance structures of Zapatistas in Chiapas and Serb minority in Kosovo. The second view, on the other hand, has a critical perspective over the local governance structures established according to a political agenda highlighting ethnic, religious or sectarian, and linguistic differences in order to pave the way for decentralization, autonomy and even independence later on. Namely, the strategy of political separation may fuel a conflict and civil war.

Moreover, as it is mentioned in the case of Somalia, some local clan elders may look for founding their own government. They may insist on a permanent governance structure based on customary practices and refused being ad-hoc. Even, for political and economic interests, they may perpetuate the armed conflict, which is the main reason behind the dysfunctionality of state institutions.[186] Therefore, clan elders and community leaders sometimes become reluctant to cooperate with state institutions. They may even compete against official state authority when a transitional, or central government, is re-constructed after serious events in a country. In such a case, clan-based local governance structures have difficulty to solve local and regional problems. The territorial expansion of al-Shabaab gives an opinion about the lack of military strength and cooperation deficiency among clan-based local governance structures in Somalia when they meet a serious threat.

[186] Mekhaus (2007).

Last but not least, it needs to be kept in mind that the factors such as historical background, internal dynamics, sociological architecture, and interaction with external actors show differences in each case of the countries suffering from state decay. Likewise, the civilians in some cases and insurgent or armed groups in the other cases can be more dominant in the local governance structures in a country or in different countries. Therefore, the legitimacy of these structures is varied from one region to another in the same country as well. Notwithstanding, the formation of an alliance between civilians and armed groups is more likely when civilians share the same ideology and purpose with armed groups. It is also a fact that, insurgent and military groups usually have more clear strategies and plans compared to civilians. While insurgent and armed groups take the advantage of conflicts and civil wars to achieve their political objectives, local governance structures can be a reflection of these objectives.[187]

[187] See Gafaro et al. (2014).

CHAPTER 4

SYRIA AS A PRESUMED 'FAILED STATE' AND INTRODUCING OF MAINSTREAM ACTORS IN THE FIELD

4.1. Syria Version of Arab Spring

The series of events from political protests to internal conflict in the Arab World, called as Arab Spring, began on 17th December 2010 with the spark of a Tunisian street vendor, Mohamed Bouazizi, who set himself on fire to protest an abusive police officer. However, the self-immolation of Bouazizi can be seen as the last straw since the political, social, and economic reasons are available in the literature searching on causes of Arab Spring. As the lack of democracy, demand for reforms, freedom and human rights, women's secondary role in society, and hopelessness of the youth for the future, inequality, the absence of political representation, and the deadlock of politics are often highlighted as the causes of Arab Spring.[188] Besides these, unemployment, population growth, the expanding gap between rich and poor, corruption, arrogant and indifferent rulers as well as state institutions were also widely emphasized as the reasons behind the wish of Arabs for the change.[189]

The protests with the slogan "the people want to overthrow the regime!" – al shaab yurid isqat al-nizam- spread quickly from Tunisia to Egypt, Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and Syria as information and communication technologies such as the broadcast of Al-Jazeera and social media channels, Facebook and Twitter in particular, played a key role in mobilizing people. The twenty-three years old authoritarian regime of the president of Tunisia, Zine el Abidine Ben Ali, was over when he was forced to flee the country. The downthrown of Ben Ali

[188] El-Husseini (2015), Bacık (2015: 111 - 142), see also Dabashi (2012: 17 - 25).

[189] Lynch (2013: 2, 10), Bacık (2015: 111 - 142).

encouraged the protesters in Tahrir Square in Cairo against President Hosni Mobarak, who ruled Egypt almost thirty years. It ended up with the resignation of Mobarak and the Supreme Council of Armed Forces took over the control in Egypt. Then, the protests erupted in Benghazi and reached to Tripoli against Gaddafi, who was ruling Libya since 1969. In the case of Libya, the uprising quickly turned into an armed conflict. With military assistance of the NATO and several Arab countries, Gaddafi was captured and killed in August 2011. The wave of Arab Spring reached to Saudi Arabia in January 2011. The protests started on behalf of human rights and against discrimination by Sunni rulers in Eastern Province where majority of citizens are Shia. Since the protests by Shia minority was labeled as terrorist activity provoked by Iran to overthrow the ruling Saudi family it was resulted with many dead and hundreds of people arrested. Also, the welfare package included generous investments in public sector to create jobs and increase payments could be regarded an influential measure taken by Saudi Arabia.[190] In Yemen, although Ali Abdullah Saleh agreed to transfer the powers his deputy Abd Rabbuh Mansur Hadi after a series of negotiations in 2011, the war between Houthis, the Shia rebel group, and the recognized Yemeni government due to the failure in political transition started in 2014, when the Houthi rebels took the control of Yemen's capital, Sanaa, and then force President Mansur Hadi to resign in early 2015. Afterwards, a coalition of Gulf States led by Saudi Arabia militarily intervened in Yemen by launching airstrikes on rebels. Since the war is still ongoing, due to the casualties, devastation and impoverishment, Yemen is approached as a failed state.[191] Saudi Arabia and Gulf states also sent troops to Bahrain to repress the demonstrations mostly by Shia population and Iran was again blamed for provocation by the Sunni regime of the state.[192] Unlike the impact of the Arab Spring in other countries, the demonstrations

[190] Colombo (2014: 167).

[191] "Yemen Civil War (2011 – 201?)," GlobalSecurity.org, accessed 2 July 2017 http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/yemen4.htm. Also, Alessandro Bruno, "Yemen: The World's Newest Failed State," Geopolitical Monitor, accessed 2 July 2017, https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/yemen-worlds-newest-failed-state/.

[192] Dabashi (2012: 21).

in Jordan did not seek for regime change, but instead, called for reforms.[193] Moreover, King Abdullah II of Jordan swiftly dismissed Prime Minister, Samir Rifai, to deal with demonstrations in a peaceful way.[194]

Even though the popular protests and riots caused political changes in Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya; the Assad's government has been succeeded to stay in power despite a protracted civil war up to the present in Syria. The protests against Bashar al-Assad's government started in March 2011 within the context of the Arab Spring, but it was expected that the situation would not be different than the other Arab countries undergone a similar process of demonstrations. The causes of discontent were seen as similar to the other countries: the lack of democracy, democratic elections since 1950s, authoritarianism, corruption, cronyism, high level of unemployment, the despair of the youth, poor social services, and so on.[195] However, after the willingness of the government to introduce reforms and deployment of the army to repress the uprisings, the opposition groups have formed rebel armies to fight against Bashar al-Assad's government. After then, Syria has been rapidly drawn into a civil war. The constant rule that uncivil groups are stronger than civil ones during the civil war has not changed in the case of Syria as well since uncivil actors had money, arms, and power.

In fact, despite the intensive protests, mass demonstrations, violence and conflict in 2011, it was 2012, the year witnessed the transformation of the conflict into a civil war between the opposition forces and government.[196] More specifically, the former UN Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Herve Ladsous,

[193] Barari and Satkowski (2012).

[194] Bacık (2015: 69).

[195] Sluglett (2016: 49).

[196] Lynch (2013: 249); Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 14. https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

confirmed that the Syrian Crisis could be characterized as civil war in June 2012 after the territorial loses of the Syrian government to the opposition.[197] Red Cross also announced that the intense conflict between the opposition armed forces and government could be considered as a civil war in July 2012.[198] It should also be noted that although the announcement of the Free Syrian Army was also in July 2011, the initial aim was to protect protesters and launch a resistance against government forces.[199] When the uprisings in the Syria have degenerated into a civil war, the supporters of the opposition started to take arms, so armed factions including the Free Syrian Army have taken to the stage and become more visible. By the mid-2012, the state's forces either withdrawn, or ejected by the opposition armed groups from peripheral territories in the north of the country in particular. Consequently, a variety of armed groups have competed to subjugate territories, exploit local resources, and accessed to external aid.[200]

In Syria, the main contenders can be divided into five categories: Syrian government and its allies, the mainstream Syrian opposition and the Al Nusra Front, the Islamic State of Iraq and as-Sham (ISIS, or Islamic State – IS - since the proclaim in June 2014), Kurdish militias, and anti-IS Coalition and Turkey.[201] In the first category, the allies of the Assad's government are represented by Russia, Iran, Hezbollah and the National Defence Forces (NDF), a locally based paramilitary group formed by the government during the civil war to fight against rebels on the ground.[202] The

[197] "Syria in Civil War, U.N. Official Says," Reuters, 12 June 2012, http://uk.reuters.com/article/uk-syria-crisis-idUKBRE84S0P320120612.

[198] "Red Cross declared Syria conflict a civil war," AlJazeera, 16 July 2012, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2012/07/2012716231913738.html.

[199] Lister (2016).

[200] Lynch (2013: 250, 251).

[201] Gill (2016).

[202] Carter Center, "Syria: Pro-Government Paramilitary Forces," accessed 22 July 2017, https://www.cartercenter.org/resources/pdfs/peace/conflict_resolution/syria-conflict/pro-governmentparamilitaryforces.pdf.

second category includes the moderate[203] (or secular) armed coalition like Free Syrian Army (FSA), Islamist coalitions like Islamic Front (a coalition of multiple Islamist brigades with no affiliation with al-Qaeda), and more radical Islamist (Jihadist) armed groups like al-Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra) associated with the al-Qaeda.[204] In this category, the some armed groups also clash against one another on occasion. Apart from Kurdish armed group the Popular Protection Units (YPG) and the IS, when it comes to the last category, the anti-IS coalition led by the United States consists of some Western and regional countries. While Turkey is a member of the coalition, it also targets the YPG, which is a partner of the US-led coalition against the IS.[205]

While the "Free Syrian Army" (FSA) representing the main moderate armed group was formed by mainly the deserters of the Syrian Army in August 2011, and it has been taken as one of the most outstanding actor until the late 2012; later on the radical Islamist groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra and the IS have became more prominent on the ground. In addition, Kurdish armed group, Popular Protection Units (YPG), which is the armed wing of the Democratic Union Party (PYD) aims to create a Kurdish autonomous region in the north of Syria. The Kurds claims that they neither supports the Assad's regime nor the opposition, but they intend to

[203] Definition of "moderate" is varied in the context of the civil war in Syria. From the perspective of Western policy makers, the armed groups having a secular standpoint and having nothing to do with extremist terrorist organizations such as al-Qaeda and ISIS are considered moderate (See Baas 2016). For instance, taking FSA as "moderate" is controversial since many battalions within the FSA have been affiliated with Muslim Brotherhood and not secular at all (See Andrew C. McCarthy 2016). Nevertheless, it is hardly for the US and Saudi Arabia to agree with each other on which armed groups are moderate in Syria. In addition, while the practices of an armed group can be claimed as "moderate" in a certain location, but "not moderate" in another location during the civil war. Also, while the civil war has prolonged in Syria, it is not easy to remain moderate for some groups as at the onset of the clashes between the government and rebel groups.

[204] Jabhat al-Nusra renamed itself as "Jabhat Fatah al-Sham" and also claimed that they broke the ties with al-Qaeda in the summer of 2016. See "Al-Nusra Front cuts ties with al-Qaida and renames itself," The Guardian, 28 July 2016, https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/28/al-qaida-syria-nusra-split-terror-network.

[205] Samuel Oakford, "Turkey: Rogue Coalition Member," Airwars, accessed 25 July 2017, https://airwars.org/news/turkey-the-rogue-coalition-member/.

concentrate fighting against the IS.[206] Besides these, there are various other rebel coalition groups including the Islamic Front, the Syrian Revolutionary Front (SRF), and many other armed groups acting at local level. While some coalitions like Syrian Islamic Front (SIF) and Syrian Islamic Liberation Front (SILF) were dissolved in time, new alliances have been established among a variety of armed groups.[207]

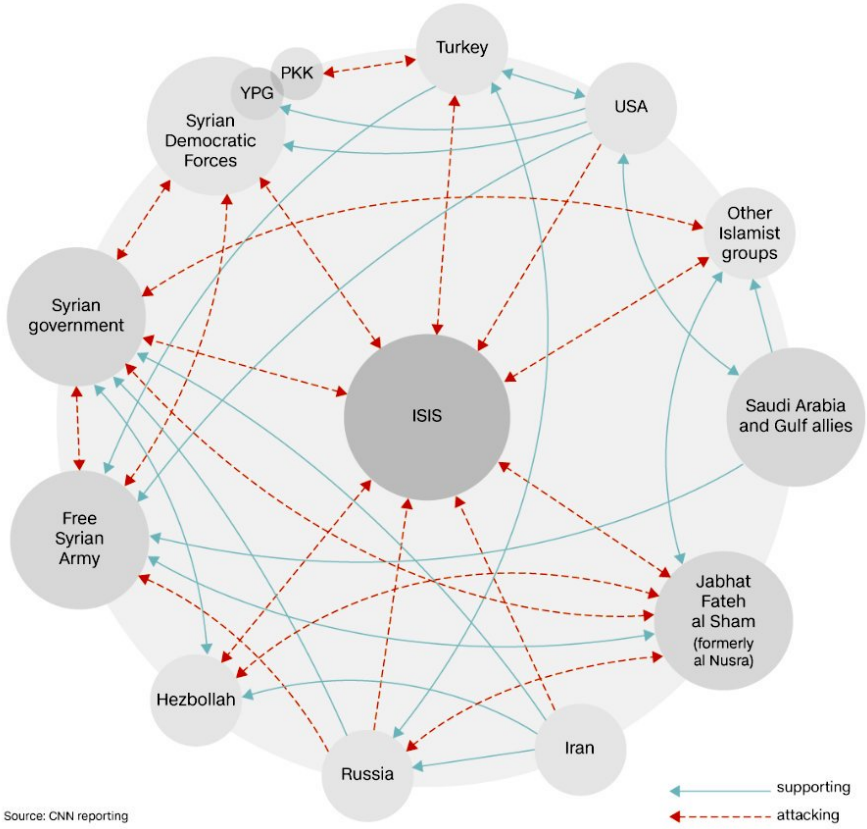

Figure 3. Who is fighting whom in Syria[208]

Despite the fact that almost all of the opponent armed groups publicly assert that their main aim is to end the Assad's government, the fragmentation among these

[206] "Syria War: A Brief Guide to Who's Fighting Whom," BBC News, 7 April 2017, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-39528673.

[207] "Guide to the Syrian Rebel," BBC News, 13 December 2013, http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-24403003.

[208] "The free-for-all in Syria will make your head spin," CNN, 10 April 2017, http://edition.cnn.com/2016/08/25/middleeast/syria-isis-whos-fighting-who-trnd/index.html.

armed groups in Syria (due to ideological division and the proliferation of extremist groups) can be regarded as one of the main reason of the extension of Syrian civil war.[209] Another reason which prolongs and as well as complicates the civil war is the fact that Russia and Iran (thereby Hezbollah) took place on the side of the government; while the United States, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia have supported the "rebel groups."[210] Since the two poles of the civil war, Syrian government and the opponent armed groups, (even various armed groups within the category of the opponent armed groups) are backed by different states; the existence of proxy wars in Syria is often emphasized.[211] Lastly, it is worth noting that the predominant Sunni identity of many opponent armed groups fighting against the government based on Alawi identity displays the sectarian characteristic of the civil war. The confrontation of Sunni and Shia sects of Islam shadow demonstrate itself at international level as well when Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia whose majority of populations are Sunni, in the general sense, have sided with opponent armed groups, but Iran with Shia majority of population (90 – 95% of Iranians according to the CIA Factbook)[212] have supported Syrian government.

4.2. Can Syria Be Called a Failed State?

As the UN, Red Cross, and money other institutions confirmed, the name of the crisis in Syria is civil war. It is surely beyond the doubt that Syria is going through tough times in its history, and even it is uncertain whether Syria will succeed to preserve its unity and territorial integrity when the civil war is over. When the common characteristics of failed states explained in the first chapter of this

[209] Abboud (2016: 60, 61).

[210] Sluglett (2016: 51).

[211] As'ad AbuKhalil, "The 8 Proxy Wars Going on in Syria Right Now," Huffington Post, accessed 23 July 2017, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/asad-abukhalil/syria-proxy-wars_b_5874488.html.

[212] "Iran", the World Factbook, Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), accessed 23 July 2017, https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ir.html.

dissertation are considered, it is not unlikely to face the arguments diagnosing Syria with failed state due to the current conditions. The consequences of the crisis in Syria started with the Arab Spring and the conditions originated from the ongoing civil war depicture Syria as a profile of failed state.

As it is indicated above, sub-state armed groups have challenged the state authority and sought for founding their own authority. Syrian government has no monopoly over the means of violence, and also it is not able to control the whole territory of the country. This means that Syria can no longer provide security for its citizens. Also, the current ruling party and the leader of Syria are not seen as legitimate by the rebel groups having motivated by sectarian and nationalist objectives, and so they compete against the state for gaining power. Aside from ethnical and sectarian differences, the involvement of the USA and Russia in the civil war has complicated the situation. In this sense, Syria within the existing conditions is unlikely to meet the minimum criteria introduced by Weber in its definition of state explained in the first chapter.

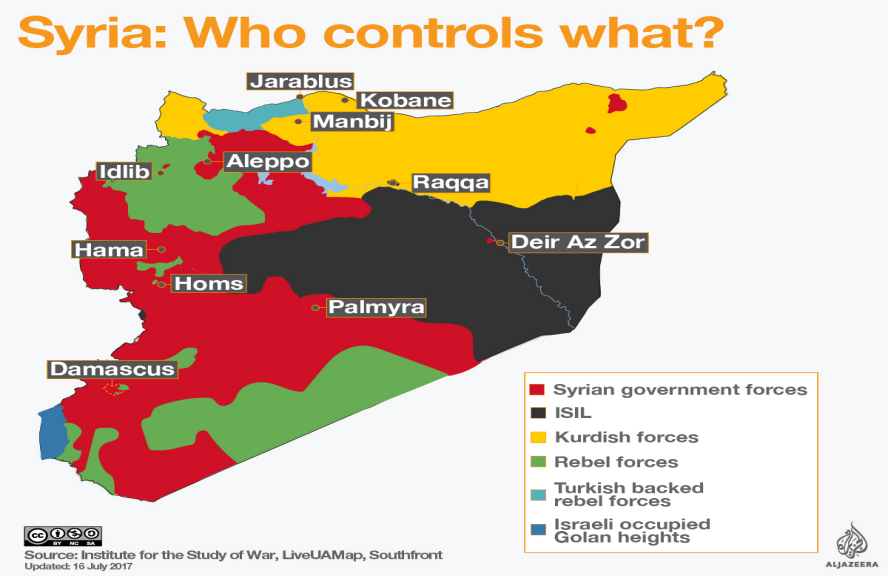

Figure 4. Who controls where in Syria[213]

[213] Syrian Civil War Map, Al JAZEERA, accessed 25 August 2017 http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/interactive/2015/05/syria-country-divided-150529144229467.html.

As it is illustrated in Figure 6, Syrian government is no longer the sole authority over its recognized territories. The government controls the capital, Damascus, and other big cities like Homs, Hama, and the most of the Aleppo. The much of the northern territory is controlled by the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), which is mainly dominated by YPG. While Turkish troops-backed rebels expelled ISIS from the northern city of Jarablus, the ISIS has still maintained large territories in the eastern Syria in spite of its recent territory losses.

What is worse is that due to the ongoing civil war in Syria, the national identity and citizenship frayed out in Syria.[214] Citizens turned back to their ethnical, clan or tribal, and religious or sectarian identities to acquire their basic needs and protection. In the regions in which have been controlled by the ISIS and SDF, being a Syrian does not mean a lot anymore, instead being a Sunni or a Kurdish makes more sense.[215] Also, in the places controlled by the government, being an Alawi is more practical rather than using their Syrian identity.

In addition, the emergence and flourishing of the IS and Jabhat al-Nusra, which are usually addressed as terrorist organizations, is also an indicator showing how Syrian territories have provided fertile ground for these and smaller-scale illegal organizations. Since the state institutions do not operate in the areas where got out of the state's control, in these areas the Syrian government could not maintain social order through providing security and maintaining the run of judiciary system, and could also not provide public goods including health care, basic education, and a wide range of infrastructural services from building roads to maintaining the function of the banking system even though these duties and responsibilities are the main factor behind the legitimacy of any state in the world. Therefore, the criminal organizations like IS and Jabhat al-Nusra could easily have grown apace in those territories.

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[214] Bacık (2015: 148).

[215] Bacık (2015: 148).

Another major indicator of state failure (or maybe a consequence of the all those developments on the ground in Syria) is the high amount of casualties and the refugee influx to neighboring countries. In its sixth year, according to the data providing by Amnesty International, more than 300,000 people have been killed and 6,6 million people internally displaced within Syria.[216] Also, 12,8 million people are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance inside Syria.[217] According to 3RP Report of the UN (Regional Refugee & Resilience Plan), more than 4.81 million people from Syria fled to Turkey (2,764,500), Lebanon (1,017,433), Jordan (655,833), Iraq (227,971), and Egypt (115,204) by 30 November 2016.[218]

Tablo 3. Numbers of Syrian refugees in the nearby countries[219]

Country	Registered Syrian refugees (30/11/2016)[1]	Total estimated number of Syrians[2]	Projected registered Syrian refugees by Dec 2017[3]	Members of impacted communities (direct beneficiaries) in 2017[4]
Egypt	115,204	400,000	113,000	1,200,600
Iraq	227,971	235,000	235,000	78,000
Jordan	655,833	1,266,000	640,000	520,000
Lebanon [5]	1,017,433	1,500,000	965,000	1,000,000
Turkey	2,764,500	2,750,000	2,750,000	1,636,000
Total	**4,810,216**	**6,151,000**	**4,703,000**	**4,434,600**

Since these numbers indicate the registered Syrian Refugees, the total estimated number is expected to be even more. The Syrian crisis is unquestioningly a global

[216] Amnesty International Report 2016/2017: The State of World's Human Rights, Syria https://www.amnesty.org/en/countries/middle-east-and-north-africa/syria/report-syria/.

[217] "Syria's Refugee Crisis in Numbers," Amnesty International, accessed 12 January 2017, https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/09/syrias-refugee-crisis-in-numbers/.

[218] UNHCR and UNDP, "*Regional, Refugee and Resilience (3RP) Plan 2017 – 2018: In Response to the Syria Crisis*," Regional Strategic Overwiew, https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/52586.

[219] *Ibid.* Also, consider that the number of Syrian refugees which is 29, 275 in the countries in North Africa is also presented within the total number of refugees as 4,810,216.

one. Attempts to escape to Europe often end with disappointment and left death stories behind. Hundreds of international/national aid organizations together with UN agencies, Red Cross and Red Crescent carries on the activity in Syria and neighboring countries. International aid community faces serious challenges to respond the crisis since the number of the Syrians escaping from the conflict and their needs have been perpetually growing in the neighboring countries.

On the other hand, from the EU's point of view, it's quite reasonable to be worry about a possible inflow of Syrians into the EU since the number of total asylum application to the European countries is 952,446 between April 2011 and May 2017 while there is no exact data about those who attempted to reach Europe from informal ways.

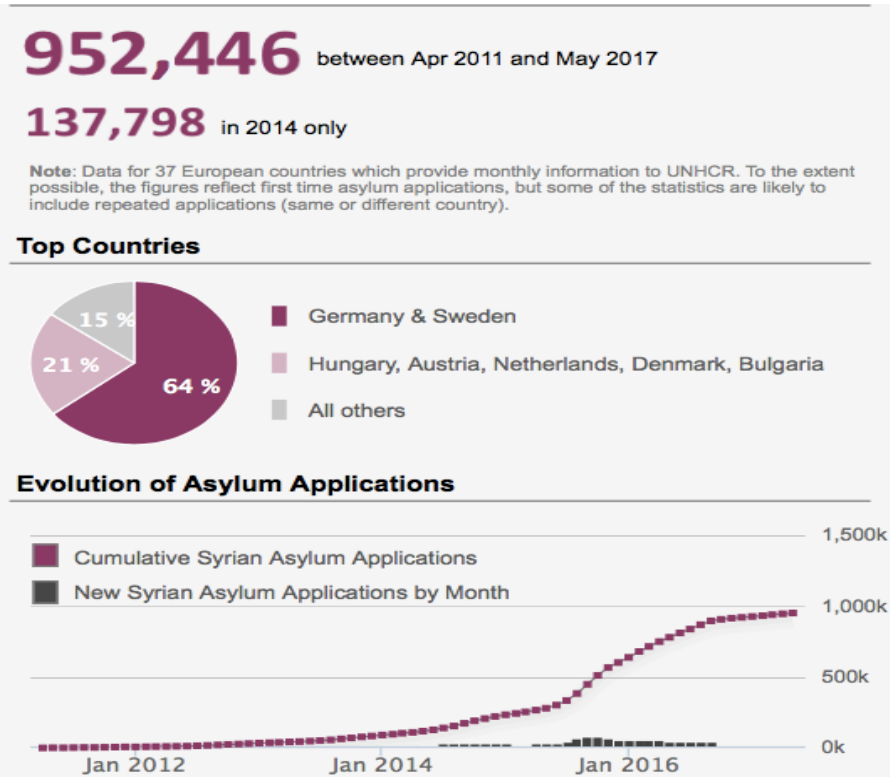

Figure 5. Total asylum applications (first time) by Syrians in European countries[220]

[220] UNHCR, Europe: Syrian Asylum Applications, http://data.unhcr.org/syrianrefugees/asylum.php.

International community could not expect that Syrian crisis would expand so rapid. Unforeseen of the extent and duration of the civil war can be regarded as a problem to respond to the Syrian crisis. Therefore, the challenges that humanitarian efforts face in the Syria case appear in both international and national stages in the case of the Syrian humanitarian crisis. On one hand, international response to the crisis have struggled with the problems of burden-sharing, ethical contradictions, politicization of humanitarian aid, and unforeseen of the extent and duration of the conflict in Syria. On the other hand, there are many challenges in the regional level that the UN agencies, official authorities in the neighboring countries, international and national aid organizations, and NGOs have to cope with. These problems include the security concern in the camps where Syrians live, the sociological problems due to the Syrian refugees, inefficient use of resources to respond the humanitarian crisis, the lack of adequate level of cooperation and coordination among the humanitarian actors in the field, the problems regarding the distribution of relief items, difficulties with the access to information, the shortage of psycho-social support towards the Syrians who are affected negatively from the conflict and have difficulty to be integrated with the host societies, transgression of neutrality and impartiality principles of humanitarian aid in the field, and so on. Since the neighboring countries do not have enough resources and strong system to host such a rapidly growing number of refugees, it could be expected that the situation of refugees in those countries would be worsen.

The decline in economy following eruption of the civil war caused loss of jobs. While the unemployment rate was 8.6% in 2010, it was exceeding 50% in 2013.[221] Food price inflation rate was seen over 100%.[222] Purchasing power of fixed salaries slumped and Syrian pound depreciated by over 300%.[223] As a result, means of

[221] Yazigi (2014: 1); also see, Syrian Centre for Policy Research "The Syrian Catastrophe: Socioeconomic Monitoring Report First Quarterly Report" January – March 2013, p. 20. https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2013071244355.pdf.

[222] Yazigi (2014: 1).

[223] Syrian Centre for Policy Research "The Syrian Catastrophe: Socioeconomic Monitoring Report First Quarterly Report" January – March 2013, p. 5. https://www.unrwa.org/userfiles/2013071244355.pdf.

livelihoods for the most of citizens vanished; industry and agricultural sectors were deteriorated; trade volume shrank; factories and work places were closed and looted; humanitarian aid was sold in the market; and illegal activities such as bribery, human trafficking, selling drugs, and informal oil trade increased.[224]

Last but not least, according to the data provided by Fragile State Index, presented by the Fund for Peace, Syria is ranked 4th among 178 states. Since the measurement of fragility is based on the twelve indicators reflecting cohesion, economic, political, and social conditions of the state, the conditions of civil war has calamitously stricken Syria and the situation has been drastically worsened from 2011 to 2017. As a result, Syria takes place in the category of 'very high alert' together with South Sudan, Somalia, Central African Republic, Yemen, and Sudan.[225]

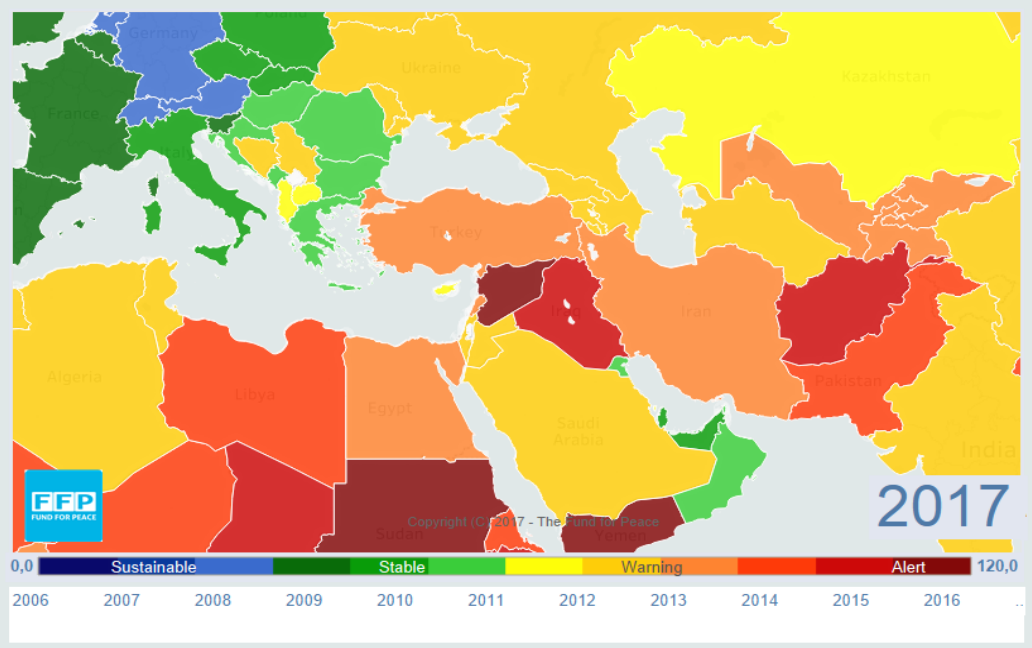

Figure 6. Fragile States Index Heat Map[226]

[224] Khalaf (2015: 47).

[225] Fund for Peace, Fragile States Index Annual Report 2017, accessed 28 July 2017, http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/2017/05/14/fragile-states-index-2017-annual-report/951171705-fragile-states-index-annual-report-2017/.

[226] *Ibid.*

When it is looked at the averages of main categories of indicators, which are the categories of cohesion, economic, political, and social indicators; it is observed that how the situation in Syria has been deteriorated since the beginning of the civil war. Since the points for each indicator is given out of '10', '10' represents the worst score for the average of each category of the indicators. in the Fragile State Index. Hence, during this period, fragile index score for the average of cohesion indicators including security apparatus (SA), factionalized elites (FE), and group grievance (GG) shifted from 7.2 (out of 10) in 2011 to 9.2 in 2017. While the average score for the indicator of external intervention (EX) and economic indicators including economic decline (EC), uneven economic development (UD), and human flight and brain drain (HF) was 7.2 in 2011, but it has expeditiously reached to 9.2 in 2017. Likewise, the average of external intervention and political indicators consisting of state legitimacy (SL), public services (PS), and human rights and rule of law (HR) has risen from 7.2 to 9.2 in six years time interval. Finally, the average of social indicators which are demographic pressures (DP) and refugees and internally displaced persons (RD) has gone up as well from 7.2 in 2011 to 9.2 in 2017.

Table 4. Top-Ten Most Fragile States in 2017[227]

FRAGILE STATES INDEX 2017

Select Year: 2017

Highlight a Specific Country No items highlighted

Country	Rank		C1 SA	C2 FE	C3 GG	E1 EC	E2 UD	E3 HF	P1 SL	P2 PS	P3 HR	S1 DP	S2 RD	X1 EX
South Sudan	1st	113,9	10,0	9,7	9,7	10,0	8,9	6,4	10,0	10,0	9,5	9,9	10,0	9,8
Somalia	2nd	113,4	9,4	10,0	8,9	8,9	9,3	9,8	9,3	9,0	9,5	10,0	10,0	9,3
Central African Republic	3rd	112,6	9,0	9,7	9,1	9,1	10,0	7,5	9,7	10,0	9,7	9,0	10,0	9,8
Yemen	4th	111,1	9,8	9,5	9,3	9,3	8,2	7,3	9,7	9,6	9,7	9,3	9,4	10,0
Sudan	5th	110,6	9,0	9,7	10,0	8,5	7,4	8,9	9,8	8,9	9,6	9,3	9,8	9,7
Syria	5th	110,6	9,8	9,9	9,8	8,1	7,7	8,4	9,9	9,2	9,8	8,2	9,8	10,0
Congo Democratic Republic	7th	110,0	9,0	9,8	10,0	8,4	8,4	6,6	9,6	9,5	9,8	9,4	10,0	9,5
Chad	8th	109,4	9,4	9,8	8,0	8,5	9,1	8,8	9,1	9,7	9,1	10,0	9,6	8,3
Afghanistan	9th	107,3	10,0	8,6	8,4	8,3	7,5	8,2	9,1	9,9	8,5	9,3	9,8	9,7
Iraq	10th	105,4	10,0	9,6	9,6	6,6	7,3	7,7	9,5	8,2	8,7	8,6	9,9	9,7

[227] Fragile State Index 2017, Fund for Peace, accessed 28 July 2017, http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/data/.

As Fragile State Index illustrates, Syria is one of the most worsened country, particulary in the last five years. Until 2011, the trend was changing towards 'improvement'. While the year 2012 witnessed the major deterioration, the worsening trend continued in the sequent years as well. Since the higher score indicate greater instability the maximum score (the sum of twelve indicators' scores given out of 10), which is 120 (12 × 10), reflects the worst score. Syria's overall score has incrementally moved from 85.9 (out of 120) in 2011 to 110.6 in 2017.[228] That is, the conditions represented by the twelve indicators have worsened 24.9 points within six years in Syria while the change is 2.7 towards improvement between 2006 and 2011. Moreover, in the last decade (from 2007 to 2017), the conditions have been deteriorated by 22 points while the change over 5 years (from 2012 to 2017) is also 16.1 points in a negative way.

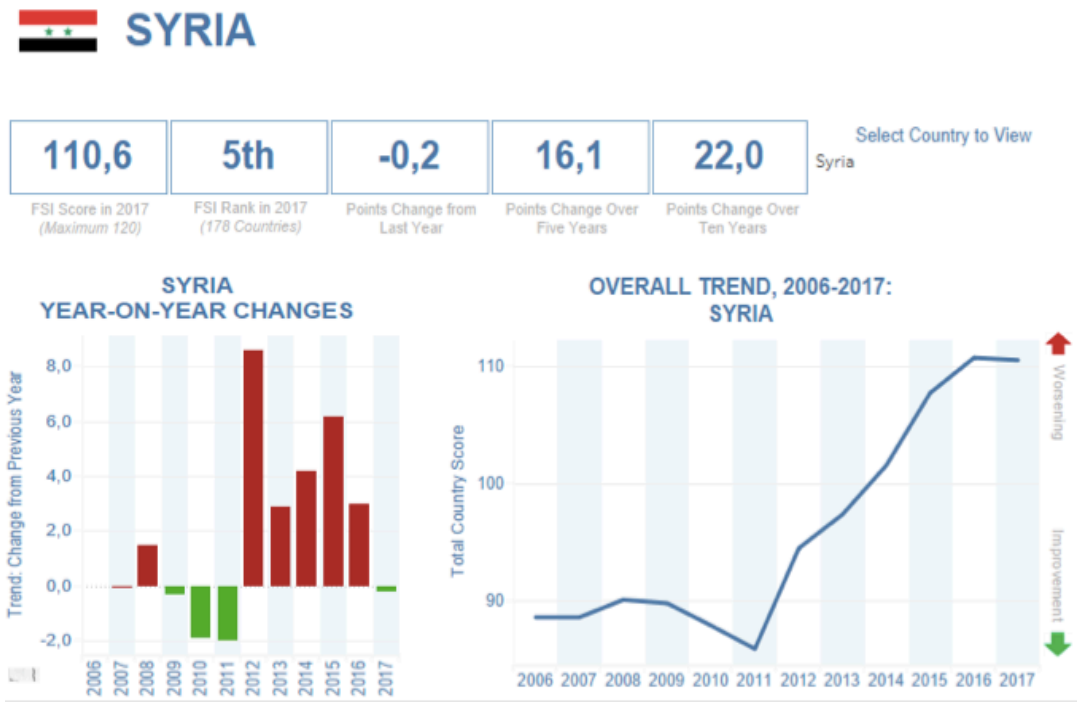

Figure 7. Change in the trend of fragility in Syria over ten years[229]

[228] Fragile State Index, Country Dashboard – Syria, Fund for Peace, accessed 28 July 2017, http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/country-data/.

[229] Fragile State Index, Country Dashboard – Syria, Fund for Peace, accessed 28 July 2017, http://fundforpeace.org/fsi/country-data/.

Although all the segments of the political, social, and economic life were not marvelous before the Arab Spring and the civil war afterwards started, no doubt that the conditions were also not so devastating and desperate in the pre-war period. However, it is implicit that the conditions resulted from the civil war and all these indicators mentioned above shows that Syria tragically has turned into a failed state in the past 6 years. Therefore, Syria is presumed as a failed state of our time as it is passing through a tough time in its history.

4.2.1. Fragmented Governance

The civil war in Syria is not only between the Assad's regime and one single center of rebel center, and the opponent armed groups fighting against the regime are also deeply fragmented ideologically and frequently fight against each other. Therefore, the areas under the control of different armed groups show different characteristics in terms of administrative and governance system emerging during the civil war. For instance, since caliphate was declared in Syria and Iraq, the administrative and service-oriented governance programs have been influenced from the religious character of ISIS.[230] Judicial and education system is based on the religious ideology of ISIS. As religious police is authorized to protect social order, non-secular curriculum has been implemented in the schools. Since coercion has become a method of governance under the ISIS rule, brutal and public punishment on the basis of their own interpretation of religion has been applied to the locals.[231] In terms of outreach programs, ISIS offers humanitarian aid, particularly food aid, during Ramadan. By publishing the magazines like Dabiq and Rumiyah in several languages including English, ISIS also has made an effort to introduce its ideology, vision and political stance, and to attract foreigners for recruitment.[232] Last but not

[230] Caris and Reynolds (2014).

[231] Rana Khalaf, "Beyond Arms and Beards: Local Governance of ISIS in Syria," E-International Relations, accessed 27 July 2017, http://www.e-ir.info/2015/01/07/beyond-arms-and-beards-local-governance-of-isis-in-syria/.

[232] "The Islamic State's (ISIS, ISIL) Magazine," Clarion Project, 25 July 2017, https://clarionproject.org/islamic-state-isis-isil-propaganda-magazine-dabiq-50/.

least, under the caliphate model of governance, the leader of ISIS is both religious official and statesman.[233] As a result, the state penetrates social lives of its "citizens" through non-secular state institutions.

On the other hand, in the most of northern areas of Syria, SDF has enjoyed international and national legitimacy of being the major group that has effectively fought against ISIS. Especially during the resistance in the battle of Kobane in January 2015, PYD promoted its democratic and secular image despite the allegation of being connected with the Kurdistan Worker's Party (PKK), which are regarded as terrorist organization by both the USA and EU. Moreover, the governance models like the 'democratic self-administration project' associated with the ideology of PYD have contributed to this image as well since the multi-ethnic and secular characteristics of its governance model were highlighted.[234] After the declaration of federal region in the north of Syria, the name of the federal system was switched from "Democratic Federal System for Rojava-Northern Syria" to "Democratic Federal System of Northern Syria" in order to be more inclusive in favor of the other ethnical and sectarian minorities living in the region in December 2016.[235] Nevertheless, critiques arisen from the Arab-majority areas in the northern Syria regarding human rights violence against civil society actors and political opposition overshadows this vision despite legitimization efforts through provision of security through the institution of Asayish, public services, public diplomacy, and delivering of humanitarian aid via communes.[236]

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[233] Caris and Reynolds (2014).

[234] Sary (2016).

[235] "'Rojava' no longer exists, 'Northern Syria' adopted instead," Kurdistan 24, 28 December 2016, http://www.kurdistan24.net/en/news/51940fb9-3aff-4e51-bcf8-b1629af00299/-rojava--no-longer-exists---northern-syria--adopted-instead-.

[236] Khalaf (2016), see also "Under Kurdish Rule: Abuses in PYD-run Enclaves of Syria," Human Rights Watch, accessed 26 July 2017, https://www.hrw.org/report/2014/06/19/under-kurdish-rule/abuses-pyd-run-enclaves-syria. Also, for the structure of the governance system in the northern Syria under the PYD rule, see Aldarwish (2016).

Last but not least, after the uprisings of the Arab Spring, local administrative councils, or local councils, emerged in order to meet local needs in the opposition-held areas where the government no longer exercised control. Local administrative councils in Syria have taken a critical role to provide key public services despite many challenges they face during the ongoing civil war. Despite the disintegration between moderate and radical armed groups within the Syrian opposition as discussed earlier, one of the most significant characteristics of those councils was that they were trying to keep militia groups including the factions of Free Syrian Army at distance to maintain their autonomy.[237] Thus, local councils had been often regarded as civil society organizations developed out of grassroots movements and have experimented new forms of governance as bottom-up institutions.[238] While local councils had spread rapidly to other towns and cities and been influential in many of these areas following the withdrawal of the government until 2014, later on, the number of these councils and also their effectiveness have fallen due to various reasons.[239] In the last chapter, local councils are elaborated in terms of emergence, governance structure and evolution over time, and assessed from the points of funding and finance, security and the relations with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness.

[237] El-Meehy (2017).

[238] Favier (2016: 7).

[239] See El-Meehy (2017: 7) and "Why Moscow now sees value in Syrian local councils," Al-Monitor, 20 February 2016, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2017/02/russia-syria-value-local-councils-shift-damascus.html.

CHAPTER 5

GOVERNANCE WITHOUT GOVERNMENT IN SYRIA

As it is discussed in the third chapter, the armament of the opposition and transformation of the conflict into civil war following the uprisings erupted within the context of Arab Spring in Syria created the conditions of a failed state explained in the first chapter. It is also worth reminding that in the territories gotten out of state's control as a result of the process of state failure, there is neither an anarchy where armed groups, warlords, and criminals all together oppress and persecute civilians nor a libertarian environment where people enjoy higher level freedom in every aspect of life, as it is emphasized in the second chapter. Civil society groups like local and international NGOs; uncivil armed groups, warlords and extremist groups; grassroots organizations like local coordination committees, local councils and sharia courts; and top-down organizations like the Syrian National Council and the National Coalition of the Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces had sought to fill the governance gap following the state failure in Syria.[240] Local people and rebel groups including both civil and uncivil sides formed political governance structures at the local level in order cope with messy and difficult conditions of the conflict and civil war to a certain degree. For rebel groups, in particular, to consolidate their authority and implement their own political agendas in the captured areas have been the objectives of top priorities.

The current fragmented governance structure in Syria has already underlined in the previous chapter. In this chapter, on the other hand, it is focused on the governance structures called as "local councils" and appeared in the opposition-held areas, particularly where Free Syrian Army factions have been active. The period of time is mainly taken as between the beginning of 2012 and the end of 2015. The background

[240] See Khalaf (2015: 65).

theme in this chapter is how local councils dispersed across Syria filled the authority and administration voids. Nevertheless, the main aim is to exhibit the challenges local councils have faced and their shortcomings in terms of funding and finance, security and relations with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness. Besides the challenges and shortcomings, also some achievements of local councils are mentioned so that making a general evaluation of local councils becomes possible. To provide a better comprehension of the phenomenon 'local councils', it is begun with the emergence and evolution of local councils, their roles, functions, and scope of activities.

5.1. Emergence and Evolution of Local Administrative Councils in the Opposition-Held Areas

Over the course of Syrian uprisings, two formations on the basis of grassroots movements have been attention-grabbing: local coordination committees (LCCs) and local administrative councils, widely known as local councils. These two entities were not sharply separated from each other since the formation of the former prepared the ground for the latter. After the government forces started to retreat from peripheral areas of the country, particularly north and northwest of Syria, some local coordination committees evolved into local councils.[241] This shows the confluent (or intersecting) characteristics of locally-formed organizations on the ground. It is claimed that LCCs activists were the main nuclei behind the establishment of local administrative councils because they sought the support from the FSA members and local leaders.[242] That is, local administrative councils, as well as local coordination committees, have "revolutionary" and "opponent" characteristics since they have been sided with the political opposition in Syria. Although it is difficult to distinguish grassroots formations like local coordination committees and local administrative councils in wartime, it is assumed that giving some details about the former provide a better understanding of the latter.

[241] Khoury (2013).

[242] *Ibid.,* p. 4, see also Hajjar et al. (2017: 1).

In spite of lacking clear structure, local coordination committees, *tansiqiyyat* in Arabic, were formed in many neighborhoods, towns and cities in order to organize protests, mobilize people to attend protests at the beginning of the uprisings in Syria in March 2011. Later on, LCCs promoted civil disobedience by organizing strikes, called as "Dignity Strike," in hundreds of locations across Syria in December 2011.[243] Moreover, drafting slogans for protests and documenting human rights violations of the government, reporting the statistics about the number of casualties, detainees, and missing people to media, and issuing declarations became a part of the activities of local coordination committees.[244] When the uprisings intensified, the need for coordination of all local activities of these committees came to light. As a result, the Local Coordination Committees was established as an umbrella organization to reflect local concerns at the national level. By the end of 2012, the network of LCCs consisted of 70 local coordination committees in the provinces such as Deraa, Homs, Banias, Saraqip, Idlib, al-Hassakeh, Qamishli, Hama, al-Raqqa, and suburbs of Damascus.[245] Since these committees had no common ideology, the educated youth and activists from leftist, liberal secularist and conservative Muslims backgrounds coexisted behind this grassroots movement.[246] The members of LCCs avoided and resisted ethnic and sectarian confrontations such as Arabs versus Kurds and Sunni versus Alawi, so it is not wrong to say that LCCs delayed the erosion of social cohesion in Syria.[247] While LCCs have mainly funded by international non-governmental organizations and wealthy Syrians living

[243] Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami (2016: 59).

[244] Khoury (2013); see "Local Coordination Committees of Syria," SyriaUntold, accessed 30 July 2017, http://www.syriauntold.com/en/work_group/local-coordination-committees-of-syria/; also see Ismail (2011: 545, 546).

[245] "Local Coordination Committees of Syria," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed 1 August 2017, http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/50426?lang=en.

[246] Erlich (2014: 85 - 90).

[247] Khoury (2013: 3 -4); Rana Khalaf, "Beyond Arms and Beards: Local Governance of ISIS in Syria," E-International Relations, accessed 27 July 2017, http://www.e-ir.info/2015/01/07/beyond-arms-and-beards-local-governance-of-isis-in-syria/.

abroad,[248] the essence of their activities was media. As in the cases of Tunisia and Egypt, the activists from local coordination committees participated in the broadcast of international media outlets as eyewitnesses and provided narratives from uprisings about the unlawfulness and violence of the government forces through social media networks like Facebook and Twitter, and later on, through websites and online magazines.[249] Furthermore, the representatives of these committees facilitated coordination among themselves via Skype meetings, so the scope of their activities expanded. Due to traditionally weak civil society in Syria, LCCs also attempted to fill this void by providing relief to internally displaced persons, giving economic assistance, rehabilitating devastated areas, and supporting children.[250] Therefore, local coordination committees began to provide food, medicine, shelter, clothing, and psychological support in some cases.[251] Since education was an important field, LCCs helped both internally displaced children and the children of refugees abroad for the continuation of their education by introducing field schools.[252] That is, local coordination committees also held the role of governance in some aspects. In addition, despite the non-violence standing of LCCs, a rise in the militarization of the counterparts led LCCs to recognize Free Syrian Army. Later on, the even provided logistical and technical support, and also intelligence for the FSA about activities of the Syrian army.[253] They also had contact with local armed groups to ensure that

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[248] Hamed (2014), also see "Local Coordination Committees of Syria," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed 1 August 2017, http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/50426?lang=en.

[249] Khoury (2013: 2 - 3).

[250] Hamed (2014).

[251] "Local Coordination Committees of Syria," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed 1 August 2017, http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/50426?lang=en.

[252] "Local Coordination Committees of Syria," SyriaUntold, accessed 30 July 2017, http://www.syriauntold.com/en/work_group/local-coordination-committees-of-syria/.

[253] "Local Coordination Committees of Syria," Carnegie Middle East Center, accessed 1 August 2017, http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/50426?lang=en.

these armed groups comply with ethical principles and respect human rights.[254] However, due to the degeneration of uprisings into a civil war, local coordination committees lost their power and most of them merged into local administrative councils.

On the other hand, it is asserted that the concept 'local administrative council' or 'local council' - *majlis al-madina, majlis al-hay, or majlis mahali* in Arabic - as a revolutionary organization was initially suggested in a paper named "A Seminar for Establishing Local Councils" written by Omar Aziz in the eighth month of the uprisings. He was a 63-year-old activist. According to the claim, he was arrested by Syrian secret police in October 2012 and died after being tortured in the jail on 16 February 2013.[255] In his paper, Aziz was complaining about the separation of "revolutionary movement" and daily human activities.[256] He argued that the "regime" has remained strong since it continued to manage daily activities. As it is clear, Omar believed that the success of a revolution would be depended on the refusal of state institutions. Therefore, local councils were needed as the structures to bridge the gap between the revolution and daily lives of humans. Omar envisaged local councils as the structures to manage daily lives of people independent from the state institutions and agencies, to promote engagement of individuals in political activities, and so to strengthen the social revolution from the bottom.[257] Yet, in the first phase, local needs became the main stimuli behind the creation of local councils rather than revolutionary ambitions in the areas where the state apparatus ceased to function as a consequence of the armed conflict and civil war. Nevertheless, there is

[254] Hamed (2014).

[255] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 16. https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf. Also, Favier (2016: 7).

[256] Omar Aziz, "A Discussion Paper on Local Councils in Syria," The Anarchist Library, accessed 10 August 2017, https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/omar-aziz-a-discussion-paper-on-local-councils-in-syria.

[257] *Ibid.*

no doubt about the influence of Omar's views on the development of local councils since they would be quickly adopted as revolutionary institutions that would serve and protect local populations and be expected to be an alternative to the state at local, regional and national level soon.

Like the creation of local coordination committees, the initial appearance and development of local administrative councils were also spontaneous and from a grassroots level.[258] Since the beginning of 2012, with the withdrawal or ejection of the state forces by the armed opposition groups, ad-hoc local councils have been created at the levels of villages, neighborhoods, towns, and cities. According to various reports, the first local council was established in al – Zabadani, a suburb of Damascus where a community about thirty thousand people were living, in January 2012 after the clashes between the armed groups particularly on the FSA ranks and government forces resulted in the withdrawal of Syrian army.[259] As the clashes intensified, the emergence of other local councils in the towns such as Saraqip in Idlib, Marea and al-Bab in Aleppo, Barzeh, Darayya, and Douma followed. The withdrawal of Syrian army also meant the cessation or slowdown of the state institutions in the villages, towns, and cities taken by the opponent armed factions.

Local councils were mainly created and run by civilians including activists and ordinary people, local leaders from wealthy and influential families and tribes, religious leaders, technocrats including former civil servants and staff of Syrian government such as engineers, teachers, and lawyers. Nevertheless, armed groups

[258] Among the explanations about why most of the subsequent local councils and their umbrella organizations cannot be considered as grassroots, one view is more paradoxical. It is asserted that the some local councils, particularly those formed in 2013, could not be regarded as grassroots since Western states and organizations had impact on their structures and functions through providing funds and aid (Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami 2016: 72).

[259] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 16. https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf. Also, Menapolis, "Local Councils in Syria: A Sovereignty Crisis in Liberated Areas," September 2013, http://menapolis.net/publications/files/1425551004pdf1SyriaLAC.pdf.

sometimes kept their own representatives in the administrative bodies of local governance structures since they were in charge of security in the area.[260]

Local councils attempted to fill the governance gap that the state institutions had left behind. In this regard, the earlier experience of LCCs mentioned above was crucial for local councils in carrying out daily government functions. Local councils have undertaken the governance activities previously carried out by LCCs with additional responsibilities and tasks after many activists of LCCs had worked for the creation of local councils. Since the initial intention was to widen and expand their governance in terms of scope and capacity, local councils endeavored to meet local needs, distribute humanitarian assistance, and provide public services and coordination among the actors like humanitarian aid organizations and NGOs dealing with governance activities as well. Moreover, local councils have carried out many governance functions, which are normally performed by municipalities. Therefore, these local administration structures have enjoyed legitimacy at a certain level since they had a civilian feature and played the role of a municipality to fill the administrative gap in their regions.

Indeed, local councils emerged throughout Syria as a new form of governance and have provided services such as reopening schools, hospitals, distribution of relief materials and aid, making up bread shortages, garbage collection, electricity and water supply, and even security through establishing local police forces in some cases.[261] Ad-hoc courts were set up for the provision of legal services, and also syndicates were formed.[262] Moreover, business and real estate deals were made

[260] Tristan Salmon, "Emerging civil administrations: a way forward in Syria," openSecurity, accessed 4 August 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/tristan-salmon/emerging-civil-administrations-way-forward-in-syria.

[261] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014. Also see; Baczko et al. (2013), http://carnegieendowment.org/files/syrian_state.pdf.

[262] Swisspeace, "Inside Syria: What Local Actors are Doing for Peace," January 2016, http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Mediation/Inside_Syria_en.pdf.

under the mandate of local councils.[263] Despite the lack of adequate resources, local councils have established executive borders including the offices for finance, humanitarian aid, services, external relations, civil relations, media, education, medical, religious endowments, security, legal and civil defence, and project management except for the offices of president and vice-president.[264]

Although the initial formation of local councils at the levels of village and town were with the grassroots origin and need-based, later on, there was also a need for political umbrella organizations at national and provincial levels in order to support and coordinate the activities of large and small-size local councils. Also, it was thought that a unified framework for local councils would be more suitable for the political agenda of the opposition in Syria. The fundamental aim of that agenda was to connect the external opposition groups and internal administrative structures, namely local councils, in order to build alternative state institutions under a single political umbrella.[265] Hence, the attempts to centralize local council structures started. The topic regarding the institutionalization and representation of local councils in the opposition-held areas was on the agenda in the meetings of the Syrian National Council (SNC) during the second half of the year 2012.[266] In the meetings held in

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[263] "Local Councils struggle to provide services with shrinking budgets," Syrian Voice, 2 September 2016, http://syrianvoice.org/local-councils-struggle-to-provide-services-with-shrinking-budgets/?lang=en.

[264] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014.

[265] Abboud (2016: 68).

[266] The SNC was founded in October 2011 in Istanbul, Turkey to unify the opposition groups including Syrian Muslim Brotherhood, some Kurdish parties, representatives of Alawi and Assyrian groups, members of local coordination committees, representatives of many other political parties and platforms, and independent actors as well under an umbrella organization (O'Bagy: 2012). Beside ousting Assad from power, the SNC aimed to create a "new Syria" based on the principles of democracy, pluralism and civil state ("Syrian National Council," Carnegie Middle East Center: 2013). Even though it was recognized by more than one hundred countries after its establishment, the SNC has gradually lost its power in terms of representing the different ethnical, sectarian, and religious communities among the opposition (See "Guide to the Syrian Opposition," BBC News). The SNC have

Istanbul, Turkey and Doha, Qatar, seven representatives from the provinces of Latakia, Homs, Daraa, Damascus, Deir-ez-Zur, al-Hassakeh, and Idlib were invited in order to create a bloc that would represent local councils. In these meetings, a draft establishing a constitution for local councils proposed the formation of a central council in each province as a decentralized form of government at local level.[267] These "provincial councils" were supposed to be in charge of the small-size local councils in villages and towns, coordinate their activities, and distributing funds to these small local councils.

Notwithstanding, local councils waited until the formation of the National Coalition for Syrian Opposition and Revolutionary Forces, known as Syrian Opposition Council (SOC), in November 2012 to be regarded as the recognized and legitimate governance mechanisms of the political opposition in Syria.[268] To stand for the interests of local councils, initially, fourteen representatives for each governorate were appointed under the body of the SOC and given the charge of delivering funds

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continued its existence as a component of the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, which was actually formed to supersede the SNC.

[267] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 16, 17. https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[268] Due to the failure of the SNC in terms of inclusiveness towards the minorities like Kurds and Alawites, on October 31, 2012 Hillary Clinton said that there is need for a new umbrella organization that would represent more opponent actors, by adding: "There has to be a representation of those who are on the front lines fighting and dying today to obtain their freedom" ("National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces," GlobalSecurity). Clinton was calling for a leadership structure that could represent the all communities living in any areas within Syria (See "Guide to the Syrian Opposition," BBC News). After this call, the Syrian opposition in both exile and Syria decided to set up a broader umbrella organization. As a result, the National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces was internationally recognized as the "sole legitimate representative of Syrians." The organization has been responsible mainly for seeking for military aid to support rebels fighting against the government, financial aid to support the local councils, and planning the post-Assad period in Syria.

to the local councils in their respective governorates.[269] Moreover, in order to strengthen and unify administrative control over the land "liberated" from the "regime forces" and to standardize the structure and functions of local councils, the Local Administration Council Support Unit (LACU) was established in March 2013; and also, in order to provide financial support through the SOC, the Assistance Coordination Unit (ACU) was formed in December 2012.[270] Furthermore, after the formation of Turkey-based Syrian Interim Government, which is supposed to be the government of the Syrian opposition, under the mandate of the SOC in March 2013; the Ministry of Local Administration, Refugees, and Humanitarian Relief was created.[271] Under this ministry, the General Directorate for Local Councils was formed in March 2014. All these attempts aimed to centralize and control the fragmented posture of local councils dispersed on large territory in Syria. On the other hand, due to the political disputes, some representatives of provincial councils created the Supreme Council for the Provincial Councils in December 2015 to represent provincial councils and express their political demands in international forums and conferences.[272]

In terms of administration level, local councils were distinguished as provincial councils, city councils, town councils, municipal councils, and area (neighborhood) councils.[273] It is worth reminding that the provincial councils at governorate level,

[269] "Supreme Council for the Syrian Provincial Councils Formed on Thursday," National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, accessed 5 August 2017, http://en.etilaf.org/all-news/local-news/supreme-council-for-the-syrian-provincial-councils-formed-on-thursday.html.

[270] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014.

[271] Favier (2016: 11).

[272] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014.

[273] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies,

many of the local councils at city and town levels after the formation of the political umbrella bodies mentioned above were neither bottom-up nor spontaneous governance structures. It is mainly because the establishment of these local councils was planned on the basis of the political agenda that aimed to strengthen and sustain local governance model in the rebel-held areas. The endeavors to create and sustain local councils have also been funded and financed by the Western and other foreign countries.[274] In addition, as the umbrella organizations had been formed and the structure of local councils had been vertically and horizontally developed as a result of the realization of their significance, they were often called as 'local administrative councils' or 'local administration councils' (LACs), 'civil administrative councils' (CACs), and 'local administrative committees' in the reports of think tanks and development NGOs. Namely, these terms have been used interchangeably to describe local governance structures, which are called as 'local councils' in this dissertation.

Furthermore, according to the National Coalition of the Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, local councils intend to fill the gap by carrying out municipal services, and so to construct future municipalities and also pave the way for future elections together with the transitional government. The aims of local councils are defined as follows:[275]

- Managing civil life, supplementing and monitoring the works of persons who provide services and also maintain the quality and development of services.
- Delivering aid coming from people, organizations, or foreign states to local

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2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

[274] AbdulRahman Jalloud, an activist, asserts that the local councils established in 2013 could not be considered as grassroots. According to him, it is simply because they remained under the influence of the Westerners as they were created and operated thanks to Western funds. (Yassin Kassab and Al-Shami 2016: 72).

[275] "Syrian Local Councils," National Coalition of Syrian Revolution and Opposition Forces, accessed 6 August 2017, http://en.etilaf.org/coalition-components/syrian-local-councils.html.

councils in a transparent and fair way.

- Providing relief, medical, media, security (civilian police force), legal, infrastructure services, and building administrative capacity as well.
- Becoming the foundation of future municipalities, which will be formal governance structures of the transitional, and later on the elected government.
- Enhancing the national cohesion through civilian work regardless of any ideology, party, and political targets.

On the other hand, although the precise number of local councils was not clear until recently, according to the data provided by Local Administration Council Unit (LACU), by March 2016, it was estimated that there were 395 valid local councils containing 6136 members in the opposition-held areas.[276] There were 113 local councils (1850 members) in Aleppo, 112 local councils (1700 members) in Idlib, 45 local councils (892) in Rif Damascus, 40 local councils (380 members) in Homs, 35 local councils (523 members) in Daraa, 35 local councils (664 members) in Hama, 6 councils (50 members) in Lattaika, and 3 local councils (35 members) in Qunaitra. While 10 local council members were in Damascus, there were also 6 Kurdish National Council (KNC)-affiliated local councils consisting of 32 members in al-Hassakeh. Nevertheless, it is also argued that the number of local councils was even higher in 2013 and 2014. For instance, by 2014 it was estimated that there were more than 900 councils operating Idlib, Aleppo, Hama, Homs, Daraa, and al-Hassakeh.[277] The majority of those councils were operating at the municipality (%43) and town (or village) levels (%28).[278]

Finally, it should be considered that local councils have been developed at different stages and varying degrees of capacity and effectiveness dependent on financial

[276] Favier (2016: 10, footnotes).

[277] El-Meehy (2017: 7).

[278] *Ibid.*

conditions, security concerns, local circumstances, access to borders of the country, and the existence of competing structures.[279] That is, the administration model was changeable because the structure, size, and capacity of local councils varied from one city to another. Yet, the foundation of umbrella organizations like the SOC and provincial councils endeavored to organize the structures of local councils in similar forms.[280] Nonetheless, it is reported that some local councils were unwilling to establish tight vertical ties with those umbrella organizations and they remained partially independent in some locations.[281] On the other hand, while in some regions, particularly those in Aleppo and Idlib provinces, most of the local administrative councils were successfully constructed and functioned on a larger scope, in some other regions the function of local councils were limited to humanitarian aid.[282] It is also reported that there have been local councils in the areas under the control of Syrian government, but they have operated in secret.[283] According to the data provided by the LACU in July 2015, the 6% of local councils were in the areas under the government control.[284]

5.2. Funding and Finance

[279] Khalaf (2015).

[280] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 17, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[281] *Ibid.*

[282] Menapolis, "Local Councils in Syria: A Sovereignty Crisis in Liberated Areas," September 2013, http://menapolis.net/publications/files/1425551004pdf1SyriaLAC.pdf.

[283] Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami, Interview by Daniel Moritz-Rabson, *In wartime Syria, local councils and civil institutions fill a gap,* PBS NewsHour, 31 July 2016, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/civil-society-emerges-syria-war/.

[284] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

The complex and fluctuant relations of local councils with armed groups posed a challenge since some donors preferred to maintain their "neutral" position in their relations with the actors of Syrian civil war. Since local coordination committees were the nuclei of local administrative councils, the way the coordination committees were funded and as well as the challenges they faced have similarity and continuity with the case of local councils. According to Assaad al-Achi, a founding member of LCCs, international aid organizations avoided contact with them since they were regarded as "rebels" in the mid-2012, but on the other hand, some states preferred them to deliver aid inside Syria because they were seen as the cheapest and most efficient way.[285] Also, personal connections and the relations with officials from European Union help them get aid.[286] About forms and targets of aid sent by different countries, al-Achi added that the USA initially provided equipment of information technologies and then supported them through certain development projects of health care and delivery of basic services; the French sent cash for purchasing medical and food items; funds from the Danish and Dutch were used to support media activities of LCCs.[287] The funds were also sought to be used for the payment of LCCs' full-time staff, campaigns for the rights of those detained by the "regime" and education activities as well.[288] After the initial formation of local councils, the inbound fund followed the similar pathways.

As in the case of LCCs, being regarded as rebels instead of civil administrative structures led distrust towards local councils and discouraged also many donors to send funds. It was thought by many donors that the funds they give would eventually fall into the hands of armed groups, FSA battalions in particular.[289] The close relations between local councils and FSA factions confirmed the doubt of donors in

[285] Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami (2016: 60).

[286] *Ibid.*

[287] *Ibid.* p. 236 (notes: 11).

[288] *Ibid.,* p. 60.

[289] Khoury (2013: 7).

this respect. Notwithstanding, it is a well-known fact that uncivil groups are stronger than civil ones during civil wars if they can subjugate territories, exploit local resources, and access to external aid.[290] In this case, the reluctance of donors to provide funding to civil local councils due to the possibility that funds may change hands actually results with the weakening of civil actors and institutions vis-à-vis armed groups and their institutions. Consequently, local councils either would cease their operation or become more dependent on the money coming from armed groups, so they would likely lose their independence to the armed groups because many armed factions could provide basic services to local people to get their loyalty and reinforce their authorities.[291] Indeed, revenues from different resources and effectiveness of local councils were crucial keys to maintain their independence from military groups. Many donors had been in the horns of this dilemma, particularly in the earlier stages of the civil war in Syria.

The scope of local councils' functions and even viability of local councils have been widely dependent on funding and finance, particularly from foreign resources. Local councils in the all developmental stages need funds in the forms of cash and material donations like food, medicine, a variety of equipment, etc. in order to continue carrying out their activities on the ground and paying the salaries of their employed staff and full-time members. Foreign governments, the United Nations, European Union, humanitarian aid efforts of international aid and development agencies and other kinds of NGOs, Syrian expatriates, donations from all over the world, and foreign Islamist funds dispatched particularly by Salafists have been the main sources of income. Also, with the extension of civil war, many Syrian NGOs and aid organizations also emerged and developed in neighboring countries, particularly in Turkey and Lebanon. Since they have offices inside Syria in the opposition-held areas, their efforts to get in touch with external donors and canalize funds into Syria

[290] Lynch (2013: 250, 251).

[291] Khoury (2013: 7), Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami (2016: 72).

also cannot be ignored.[292] Other agencies and initiatives abroad such as Syrian Business Forum, Syrian Women Organization in Saudi Arabia, and An Initiative for a New Syria organized fundraising campaigns as well.[293] However, despite all these efforts, as financing has remained limited, local councils located in different areas in Syria received funds irregularly.[294]

On the other hand, levying taxes and charging a low fee for services like electricity were also the policies implemented by some local councils to increase their revenues.[295] However, it is hard to say these policies became successful and helped local councils increase their income. Due to difficult living standards and high inflation during the civil war, the policies of levying taxes and charging fees for services have not been viable.[296] In addition, a few local councils launched initiatives in order to generate additional income due to limited external funding and aid. For instance, the local council in Douma, a region close to Damascus, invested in a recycling factory where waste is converted into organic fertilizers for sale in the markets in Eastern Ghouta.[297] However, despite all these efforts, the income-generating activities had been unsurprisingly disrupted under the threat of daily bombings, and so hardly sustained for a certain length of time.

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[292] Swisspeace, "Inside Syria: What Local Actors are Doing for Peace," January 2016, http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Mediation/Inside_Syria_en.pdf.

[293] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[294] Tristan Salmon, "Emerging civil administrations: a way forward in Syria," openSecurity, accessed 4 August 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/tristan-salmon/emerging-civil-administrations-way-forward-in-syria.

[295] El-Meehy (2017: 13).

[296] "Syrian rebels get to grips with local government," Financial Times, 30 April 2013, https://www.ft.com/content/62893958-b179-11e2-9315-00144feabdc0.

[297] Darwish (2016: 3).

The money granted by foreign governments through the SOC and provincial councils had been one of the main income sources of local councils. When foreign governments had sent money to the SOC in general, and then the SOC allocated this money among 14 provincial councils, and finally the provincial councils distributed it to the local councils in rebel-held areas. For instance, an $8 million donation from Qatar was sent to the SOC to be distributed among the 14 provincial councils in the end of 2012.[298] By the mid-2013, while the SOC was sending $1 million to the provincial council in Aleppo, the local council in al-Bab was getting $80 thousands from the provincial council.[299] In addition, the "Syrian Interim Government" explained that they received $6 million from the US as a direct financial aid to support the local councils in January 2015.[300] It is averred that the amount of aid sent by the American government to the Syrian opposition between 2012 and November 2015 reached approximately $500 million even though it was not clear how much of this amount reached to the local councils inside Syria.[301] The money sent by the US was planned to be used in reconstruction and to buy the equipment such as generators, water pumps and tankers besides strengthening the capability of the local councils mostly located in northern Aleppo and northwestern Idlib provinces in terms of emergency aid response.

Furthermore, the EU has been one of the most prominent donors, and its financial assistance, in general, has been mainly through the UN's agencies such as the UNHCR and UNRWA, and international NGOs like the British DFID, German GiZ,

[298] Khoury (2013: 7).

[299] Baczko et al. (2013: 8).

[300] "US gives $6 million to Syria opposition government," DailyStar, 22 January 2015, http://www.dailystar.com.lb/News/Middle-East/2015/Jan-22/284937-us-gives-6-million-to-syria-opposition-government.ashx.

[301] "With Authorities Gone, Local Councils Take Charge in Syria," VOA, 11 November 2015, https://www.voanews.com/a/with-authorities-gone-local-councils-take-charge-in-syria/3052990.html. Also see, "U.S. Pledges nearly $100 million to support Syrian opposition," Washington Times, 4 October 2015, http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/oct/31/us-pledges-nearly-100-million-support-syrian-oppos/.

and French FEI since they have played a pivotal role in delivering humanitarian aid and implementing developmental projects within Syria.[302] Nevertheless, the EU has also been in touch with the local councils aiming to play the role of local government on the ground because the EU officially suspended its relations with Assad's government since May 2011. For instance, the European Commission decided to allocate €40 million from its general budget in 2015 as the humanitarian and developmental contribution in Syria, which would be mainly spent for the services including livelihoods, education, health, agriculture, shelter, protection, and water.[303] In providing of all these services, local councils were approached as a partner on the ground. Thus, the EU funded projects have also sought to reinforce the local councils that could be accessed in Syria.[304]

In return for the financial flow through the SOC, local councils were motivated to operate under the supervision of the SOC and as well as provincial councils. While the transparency of local councils was checked through the financial reports asked by the provincial councils, in some cases provincial and local councils shared their financial spreadsheet regarding their income and expenditures on their Facebook pages for the sake of transparency and also to prevent corruption.[305] Moreover, the finance offices in some of these councils kept the records of funds and donations

[302] See United Nations, *How Humanitarian Funds for the Syria Crisis were Spent: Covering January to December 2013, Syria Humanitarian Assistance Response Plan/ Regional Response Plan*, 2013, http://www.unesco.org/science/syria/Syriacrisis-achievementsreportforKuwaitConference2.pdf.

[303] European Commission, *Commission Implementing Decision of 4.12.2015 on the 2015 special measure for the Syrian population to be financed from the general budget of the European Union* (Brussels: European Commission), 2015. https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/c_2015_8541_sm_part_i_decision.pdf.

[304] *Ibid.*

[305] See the analyses funding and finance of the Yabrud Council, Daraa Council and al-Raqqa Councils, Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

from the Syrians living abroad.[306] For instance, finance office in the Yabrud Council included seven influential local persons and four expatriate representatives of the people living in Yabrud town.[307] By getting assistance from an accountant and auditor, the council was keeping the record of the funds and donations, and then, this record was being published.

However, many local councils have criticized the role of the SOC in management and distribution of aid and donations. Because it has been thought that multilayered bureaucracy caused more bureaucratic expenditures, and there has been a claim about fund diversions that aid materials were sold at the markets; foreign donors were requested to send aid directly to local councils.[308] Some donors also realized the failure of the SOC and its units, the LACU and ACU, in delivering public services and conducting projects. As a result, by the end of 2013, those donor agencies mainly from the US and UK started to by-pass the SOC and get in touch directly with local councils to conduct various projects including food security, washing, electricity, and waste management.[309] Moreover, since its creation, the EU had also been sending financial support through the ACU, which is the agency operated under the hierarchy of the SOC, but the EU officials also noticed the claims about

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[306] According to a survey published in July 2015, except for those in al-Raqqa and Sweidaa, there were 405 local councils across Syria. More than one third of these councils had specialized finance officers and a fifth of local councils had non-specialised finance officers with high school degree or less (Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015).

[307] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[308] Dylan Crimmins and Joseph Hamoud, "Aid local councils, not the Syrian National Coalition" openDemocracy, accessed 14 August 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/dylan-crimmins-joseph-hamoud/aid-local-councils-not-syrian-national-coalition.

[309] Favier (2016: 8).

corruption in this organization, too.[310]

On the other hand, some members of local councils often criticized the conditions and criteria applied by donors to be chosen as their partners in the projects because many councils had difficulties to meet.[311] Nevertheless, according to an estimation in 2015, one-fifth of the projects of %75 of local councils took support from donors to be implemented, and the rest of the local councils were even more dependent on external funds to carry out their works.[312] While the functioning of many local councils was highly dependent on the funds sent by external donors and international NGOs due to the lack of resources, the funding was often assessed as too limited and temporary, which affected the quality and sustainability of the services in a negative way.[313] The dependency of local councils on foreign funds hindered them to diversify their income sources. It is also reported that this dependency encouraged some donors to intervene the structure and work of local councils, which actually disrupted their runnings.[314]

Last but not least, the issue of funding and finance could also be thought outside the box. On the one hand, the level of income determined the capacity and scope local councils have operated, so richer local councils built more developed administrative structures. On the other hand, location, available natural resources, and the wealth of the former residents of a certain location in Syria, who started to live abroad especially after the crisis, had a great impact on the income level of local councils. First of all, the local councils located in strategic areas like those in the northern provinces such as Aleppo and Idlib received better funds. Humanitarian aid through NGOs and local councils were also easily delivered in these locations. Economic life

[310] Trombetta (2014: 29, 30).

[311] Hajjar et al. (2017: 20).

[312] El-Meehy (2017: 13).

[313] Hajjar et al. (2017: 20).

[314] Hajjar et al. (2017: 20, 21).

even revived to a certain degree thanks to cross-border trade. For instance, the towns like Harem, Sarmada, Azaz, and Jarablus, located in northern Syria and close to the border with Turkey, benefited from more funds and economic boom, so besides delivering basic needs and providing some certain services, they started to focus on reconstruction as well.[315] However, many local councils like those in the suburbs of Damascus such as Daraya and Zamalka are not located in the border areas, so they had struggled to survive and were far from presenting an ideal governance model. In such locations, distribution of humanitarian aid remained as the main function of the local councils.[316] For instance, due to the absence of resources stemming from its besieged position, the local council in Zamalka functioned on the basis of projects only when funds were available.[317] Secondly, natural resources directly influenced the income of local councils. For instance, because of the existing oil wells, the provincial council in Deir-ez-Zur benefited from oil production and industry of cotton.[318] There have been also local councils, like Rastan, which benefited from their fertile land in terms of farming.[319] Finally, the wealthy Syrians living abroad and those who fled abroad due to the crisis supported their towns and cities by sending money and basic necessities. For instance, the local council in Yabrud received a good amount of money from expatriates since they maintained their ties with Yabrud and want to help their fellows and relatives who continued to live there.[320] However, being funded well by wealthy Syrians abroad sometimes harmed

[315] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014.

[316] *Ibid.*

[317] Hajjar et al. (2017: 5).

[318] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014.

[319] *Ibid.*

[320] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

the relations between provincial councils and local councils. For example, when the local council in Seida became self-sufficient thanks to funding given by its former residents abroad and so became able to pay the salaries of its administrative and technical staff, it refused the supervision of the provincial council in Deraa and charged it with corruption.[321]

5.3. Provision of Security and Relationship with Armed Groups

As it is discussed in the last section, the relationship between local councils and battalions, particularly those of the FSA, was a deterrent factor in funding and financing of local councils by donors and NGOs since they wanted to remain neutral. The FSA battalions had been handled as a "matter of terror" by the Syrian government and not welcomed by Iran and Russia. Therefore, it was quite unfavorable for the image of donors and NGOs to deal with local councils. It was risky as well because it might be the case that donors and NGOs could be regarded as the "supporters of terrorist groups" by the Syrian government and its allies when they funded local councils. Nevertheless, those neutral donors and NGOs could fund and finance local councils to a limited degree, but it would be naive and infeasible to expect security as well from those donors and NGOs.

There are roughly five reasons explaining the logic of the relationship with local armed groups from the vantage point of local councils. First of all, the main objective of local councils was to govern the areas and communities they existed in. Governance could never be considered regardless of security in the time of a conflict and civil war in particular. Just as they needed cooperation with NGOs, local councils also needed cooperation with armed groups for security in order to work effectively on the ground and maintain order in the communities they have operated. Secondly, the provision of security should not be handled in a narrow framework like the security of civilians lives only. In fact, it also means the security of social order and infrastructure systems by maintaining and implementing military force, police

[321] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014.

force, and judicial system in a systematic way.[322] Therefore, without getting help from armed groups and coordinating with them, it was unlikely to carry out these functions. Third, it was quite costly for local councils to form their own security bureaus in order to be independent of armed groups. Due to the limited resources and intensifying humanitarian crisis, the priority of many local councils was to focus on the delivery of basic services, but not even infrastructure projects.[323] Forth, it was thought that having their own military bureaus might lead to tensions with local armed groups as well.[324] Last but not least, due to violence stemmed from the civil war, local councils needed protection for themselves as well since there had been competing armed groups including Jabhat al-Nusra, YPG, and ISIS, which had an aim of implementing their own governance model in the areas where they consolidated their controls. Hence, cooperation with the Free Syrian Army divisions as their military forces against the attacks coming from outside helped local councils get protection for their institutional existence. As a result of all these facts, local councils had been highly dependent on, and so always in a relationship with the armed groups within the FSA and other local military groups in order to ensure their security during the civil war.

To understand the nature of the relations particularly between local councils and FSA factions, it is necessary to know the initial aspect of the FSA formation. Many people, mostly young men, in Syria took arms to protect their families and neighborhood when the Syrian government escalated oppression and persecution including military attacks on residential areas, detainment, torture, and rape.[325] For

[322] Rana Khalaf, "Beyond Arms and Beards: Local Governance of ISIS in Syria," E-International Relations, accessed 27 July 2017, http://www.e-ir.info/2015/01/07/beyond-arms-and-beards-local-governance-of-isis-in-syria/.

[323] Tallaa (2017: 7).

[324] *Ibid*.

[325] Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami (2016: 79), see also Robin Yassin-Kassab and Leila Al-Shami, Interview by Daniel Moritz-Rabson, *In wartime Syria, local councils and civil*

instance, it is claimed that many of the detainees and those whose houses were destroyed and relatives were killed had their own personal reasons to take arms rather than just craving for seeing the fall of the "regime" as soon as possible.[326] Those people, who had been residents of a certain area once upon a time, but then affected by the brutality of the government, spontaneously formed armed groups or joined preexisting ones. That is, the components of the armed groups in the opposition-held areas were also including those who were once the ordinary residents of those areas. Besides these residents, as it is mentioned earlier, the deserters of the Syrian army and those who thought that militarization is a need to overthrow the government were other major components of armed groups. Many of the deserters of the army had even first gone to their hometowns and then joined armed opposition groups there.[327] The exact number of those deserters are not known, but it was estimated that by March 2012 there had been approximately 60 thousands deserters of which many joined local battalions later on.[328] Eventually, many of these armed groups and brigades started to operate under the FSA branch.

As an indicator of that interwoven nature of military groups and the local grassroots organizations, in the time when protests against the government turned into conflicts, men from the FSA groups were in coordination with the members of LCCs to protect civilians during the demonstrations.[329] At that time, the Civilian Protection Commission (CPC) was established to provide coordination and cooperation between the political opposition and the armed groups of the FSA. Therefore, when the conflicts had started within the framework of Arab Spring in Syria, armed groups and grassroots activists of the LCCs have cooperated. Even, one activist in an

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institutions fill a gap, PBS NewsHour, 31 July 2016, http://www.pbs.org/newshour/updates/civil-society-emerges-syria-war/.

[326] Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami (2016: 80).

[327] *Ibid.*, p. 82.

[328] Lister (2016: 5).

[329] O'Bagy (2012: 30, 31).

interview displayed the level of cooperation: "One day they'd have a gun over their shoulder, and they'd be shooting at Assad's forces, and the next day they'd be standing next to you in a demonstration, chanting for the same things you were chanting for."[330]

While the LCCs were regarded as the nuclei of local councils, it was the local councils that attempted to monopolize the means of violence by taking armed groups under their control.[331] Since some local councils had their own military and police units[332] and some other were affiliated with various armed groups, it can be said that there was no single form of relationship. The relationship with armed groups in different locations was at different intensity.[333] Various local dynamics such as limited fund and resources, competition over power, the existence of an active conflict, and how the area had been taken from the government forces (with or without battle) differentiated the relationship between the armed opposition groups and governance structures. Therefore, it is quite hard to explain the relation patterns between the two of them. Nevertheless, in general terms, the armed groups affiliated with the FSA withdrew from the areas completely taken from the Syrian government like Kafr Nabel in Idlib to the outskirts of the city by the end of 2013.[334] In such places, the security issue was the responsibility of police forces or a composition of

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[330] *Ibid.,* p. 31.

[331] El Meehy (2017: 7).

[332] See freeSyrianTranslator, "The First Daraya local council press conference," YouTube video, 20:37, posted 4 February 2013, http://www.easybib.com/guides/citation-guides/chicago-turabian/youtube-video/.

[333] See Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[334] Menapolis, "Local Councils in Syria: A Sovereignty Crisis in Liberated Areas," September 2013, p. 8, 9. http://menapolis.net/publications/files/1425551004pdf1SyriaLAC.pdf.

armed groups' members.[335] Therefore, as discussed in the second chapter, the form of social order was closer to aliocracy in the places under the control of the FSA whose armed groups' intervention in public administration and social life was limited. In partially "liberated" places, nevertheless, both members of armed groups and police forces could be observed.[336] In the areas where an active conflict was available, on the other hand, governance affairs including distribution of relief, provision of basic services, policing and adjudication were highly under the control of armed opposition groups.[337] Hence, the form of social order was rebelocracy in such areas. That is, armed groups excessively intervened in governance matters in those places.

When it comes to the challenges local councils had faced since the period they were established, for the sake of continuity of the topic regarding the relations between local councils and armed opposition groups it is more suitable to commence with the unsound representation of the members of armed groups in the assembly of local councils. In some cases, moderate armed groups, especially those who protected their own towns and cities, played a constructive role in the establishment of local councils.[338] Although the members of those armed groups had also a number of seats in the assemblies of local councils, they were not so dominant in the administrative affairs in general.[339] However, in some cases, like the local council in Nawa located in Deraa, the members of local councils appointed by armed groups were more dominant in the administration of local councils.[340] Even, the civilian character of the

[335] *Ibid.*

[336] *Ibid.*

[337] *Ibid.*

[338] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 19, 20.

[339] *Ibid.*

[340] Hajjar et al. (2017: 21).

local councils in such places could not become prominent.[341]

Nevertheless, more serious and even vital challenges that had an impact on the overall security of local councils were stemmed from the loose and fragmented structure of the armed opposition, the FSA in particular. When numerous armed groups at the local level were emerging at a fast pace in 2011 and 2012, most of these groups connected themselves with the FSA. Due to the central leadership of the FSA out of Syria in Turkey and as well as lacking a strong centralized leadership, the fragmented structure and locally-rooted nature of the armed opposition had never been united as desired.[342] Actually, in general, armed groups have been changing their sides and creating alliances with other armed groups because of the strategic reasons such as agreements between the leaders of armed groups, access to funding, and alteration in the situation of the ongoing civil war.[343] For instance, when donors discontinued funding a particular armed group, then this group sought for allying itself with another armed coalition to access to the funding source again.[344] Similarly, "moderate" armed groups like the FSA hesitated to ally with the radical religious groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra not only because of ideological reasons but also not to discredit itself in the eyes of donors.[345]

Moreover, the problems with the financing of the FSA through the SOC military office and irregular and partial payments of the salaries of members of the FSA had escalated the disengagement of the armed opposition at the FSA ranks and rendered

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[341] See Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[342] See Lister (2016).

[343] Baas (2016: 8, 9).

[344] *Ibid.*

[345] *Ibid.*

Islamist armed coalitions more appealing.[346] Thus, the establishment of other coalitions of armed groups such as Islamic Liberation Front (SILF), Syrian Islamic Front (SIF) formed in late 2012, and Islamic Front formed at the end of 2013 included the armed groups, which did not align themselves with the FSA.[347] For instance, significant armed groups on the ground such as Liwa al-Tawhid mainly located in Aleppo, Suqor al-Sham in Idlib, Jaish al-Islam in Damascus, Idlib and Aleppo, and Ahrar al-Sham in Idlib, Hama, and Aleppo gave up cooperation with the FSA at the end of 2013, and the first three of these groups joined the Islamic Front.[348] When it is considered that the FSA also distanced itself from radical armed groups such as Jabhat al-Nusra, which had been connected with al-Qaeda; dualities or parallel structures became unavoidable in the administration of towns and cities. As a result of the trend of dissociation and establishment of new coalitions, to give an example, it was claimed that while approximately 65% of Deraa province was controlled by the armed groups tied to the FSA, the remaining parts of the province were under the control of Islamist armed groups on the rank of al-Nusra Front by the end of 2013.[349] Such dissociation developments on the ground undermined the military strength of the armed opposition groups, particularly the FSA, and the efforts for the unification of a wide range of battalions.

Indeed, local councils were adversely affected by the fragmented structure of the armed opposition. While this fragmentation led to the weakening of the FSA and other allied armed opposition groups, it indirectly eased the rise of more radical armed groups. Therefore, the competition over resources and sudden handover of lands often occurred among various armed groups, which threatened the security of

[346] Sayigh (2013: 9).

[347] Lister (2016: 7).

[348] Lister (2016: 11, 12).

[349] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 25, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

local councils. Particularly, together with the increase in military weight of Jabhat al-Nusra and the emergence of the IS in the mid-2013, competition over land and natural resources among the armed actors had been escalated. The expansion of radical Islamist armed groups like Jabhat al-Nusra and the IS throughout 2013 and 2014 had directly affected the survival of local councils. While main donor countries gave the priority to the fight against "terrorist" organizations, these "terrorist" organizations created their own governance institutions in the areas such as al-Raqqa, Deir-ez-Zur, and some parts of al-Hassakeh and Aleppo. The members of the local councils in these places were either arrested or internally displaced and forced to leave the country.[350] Therefore, local councils had to operate in neighboring countries since they could not find a ground in their hometowns within Syria.[351] In the places taken from the IS by the Kurdish forces such as Manbij and Tal Abyad, the local councils were not allowed to be re-established since the Kurdish also wanted to put their canton system into practice because they have self-administration desires, too.[352] As a result of these developments, as the territories under the control of the FSA and other allied armed opposition groups diminished from 40% in the last months of 2012 to about 13% and 15% of the whole Syrian territory at the beginning of 2016, the number of local councils also sharply declined.[353]

Not only radical Islamist groups including the IS but also the military strategy of Syrian government posed a fatal challenge for local councils. Military attacks including aerial strikes and besieging strategies were deliberately used by the Syrian state over the local councils in the cities such as Daraya, Douma, Maarat al Nouman, and Aleppo.[354] Even though some of the local councils achieved to survive under

[350] Favier (2016: 9, 10).

[351] Samer Araabi, "Syria's Decentralization Roadmap," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed 6 August 2017, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68372.

[352] Favier (2016: 10).

[353] *Ibid.*

[354] *Ibid.*, p. 9, see also Darwish (2016).

these circumstances, those strategies eventuated in a flow of the population from the opposition-held areas to the cities under the control of the state for security reasons. It is estimated that approximately 10% of the initial population continued to live in the besieged cities while about 45 - 50% of the Syrian population including the supporters of "revolution" moved from the besieged cities and started to live in the government-controlled areas by 2016.[355] The estimation on the civilians who fled from the opposition-held areas due to military attacks and besieging strategies of Syrian government also shows that many of those civilians from Aleppo and Idlib moved to coastal areas while those from the besieged cities moved to the center of Damascus.[356]

Nevertheless, it is worth noting that despite the threats of attack from Jabhat al-Nusra, ISIS and the Syrian government, the northern provinces of Syria were more secure than those besieged ones in the interior parts of the country. As a result of this fact, the development stage and number of local councils were dependent on the security conditions in their location.[357] The local councils in more secure places, like those close to the borders, especially Turkish border, reached to more advanced stages in terms of institutional development. Also, since northern Syria was more secure, the provinces there witnessed the creation of the majority of local councils than the interior areas of Syria. For example, based on the data published in July 2015 by the LACU, the local councils in Idlib composed 27% and those in Aleppo formed 23% of all local councils spread through Syria.[358] The local councils in Hama constituted 12%, those in Homs constituted 11%, those in Daraa constituted 6%, those in al-Hassakeh constituted 5%, and the rest constituted only 3% of all local

[355] Favier (2016: 9).

[356] *Ibid*.

[357] Khalaf (2015: 46).

[358] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

councils.[359]

On the other hand, many local councils had faced challenges regarding the issues of forming and operating police forces, the intervention of armed groups in judicial affairs, parallel judicial courts, and enforcement of courts' decisions. The civil war inevitably caused an increase in criminal activities such as robbery, theft, looting, and extortion.[360] Thus, some local councils tried to provide institutional solutions to reduce violence in the community by forming police forces and a judicial system. In order to ensure security, western governments were willing to financially support the civil defense units, namely police forces.[361] In this regard, the Free Syrian Police and White Helmets were established to provide security.[362] Since they were funded or in some cases even created by the Western donors, these civil defense units worked semi-independently of local councils.[363] Nevertheless, it is reported that the West was avoided to send arms and even basic equipment such as truncheon and handcuffs.[364] Therefore, the Free Syrian Police, for instance, confronted big problems in doing their works in the locations where various armed groups have been floating around. For example, the police force consisted of former police officers, those who deserted, and volunteers under the control of the provincial council in Aleppo could not enforce armed groups its orders and properly apply the decisions of the United Court, a tribunal based on Islamic (sharia) law.[365] While

[359] *Ibid.*

[360] Tallaa (2017: 7 - 9).

[361] Khalaf (2015: 62).

[362] Favier (2016: 8).

[363] *Ibid.*

[364] "Bringing truncheons to a gunfight: The travails of Syria's unarmed police," The Economist, 2 March 2017, https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21717994-rebel-held-areas-experiment-police-who-dont-rob-and-torture-travails.

[365] Adam Baczko, Gilles Dorronso, and Arthur Quesnay, "The Civilian Administration of the Insurgency in Aleppo, Syria" International Peace Institute: Global Observatory, accessed 13

armed groups became more influential over the judicial courts relying on sharia law, the police forces highly remained ineffective in this sector. Likewise, the tasks like arresting criminals were usually performed by armed groups.[366] Under such circumstances, police forces were only able to focus on the works like organizing traffic, patrolling the streets at night, constructing shelters to protect residents from bombs, keep residents out of the dangerous fields, and fixing the streetlights.[367]

Furthermore, the indispensable relations with armed groups either for security or funding matters gave rise to the intervention of armed groups in ad-hoc judicial courts. While many armed opposition groups operated under the flag of "moderate" and "secular" FSA or allied with it, the reality was that most of these groups and also other non-affiliated armed groups had an Islamic religious identity. Therefore, in some cases, relatively secular judicial courts were replaced with sharia courts because of the pressure from armed groups, or parallel sharia courts were established and operated by armed groups along with these relatively secular courts.[368] Even, in some provinces, each armed group had its own sharia court. For example, in parallel with the United Court established in the areas under the control of the FSA in Aleppo, the armed groups which were cooperating with the FSA such as Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Suqur al-Sham and al-Tawhid set up their own court, called the Legal Committee (hai'at ash-sharia) in the beginning of 2012. The Legal Committee favored a more strict application of sharia law. Also, these armed groups created their own police force consisted of around 200 men from their own

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August 2017, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/11/the-civilian-administration-of-the-insurgency-in-aleppo/.

[366] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 20.

[367] "Bringing truncheons to a gunfight: The travails of Syria's unarmed police," The Economist, 2 March 2017, https://www.economist.com/news/middle-east-and-africa/21717994-rebel-held-areas-experiment-police-who-dont-rob-and-torture-travails.

[368] Darwish (2016: 2).

members.[369] Even though an armed conflict was avoided because of the parallel judicial institutions, not surprisingly there were tensions between those armed groups. In the August of 2013, some men from the Legal Committee surrounded the United Court a day long since they believed that some practices of the United Court had not been compatible with sharia law and considered it as a rival institution.[370] The issue was solved when the members of the FSA forced those men from the Legal Committee to recede.[371] Therefore, it was obvious that local armed groups were sometimes competitive and disruptive. In this regard, the separation of power among judicial courts, armed groups, and local councils had been quite problematic. However, it should also be considered that local councils needed armed groups for their enforcement power to implement court decisions.

Lastly, when it comes to court judgment on the cases including members of armed groups in the places where the "moderate" armed groups existed, it can be said that the civil courts were usually authorized to handle such cases and enforce the decisions.[372] However, in the practice, the enforcement of these decisions had been problematic in some cases. It is because if the defendant members of any armed group did not accept the decision of a civil court, he could easily join another armed group.[373] That is, not only ideology and inadequate funding but also dissatisfaction with court decisions could lead fighters to join other armed groups.

5.4. Legitimacy

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[369] Adam Baczko, Gilles Dorronso, and Arthur Quesnay, "The Civilian Administration of the Insurgency in Aleppo, Syria" International Peace Institute: Global Observatory, accessed 13 August 2017, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/11/the-civilian-administration-of-the-insurgency-in-aleppo/.

[370] *Ibid.*

[371] *Ibid.*

[372] Baas (2016: 10).

[373] Baas (2016: 10, 11).

Legitimacy refers to "complex set of beliefs and values and the relations between governance structures and society.[374] In the case of local councils in Syria, legitimacy could be derived from the local dynamics and process of revolutionary insurrection,[375] but the sustainability of legitimacy is highly dependent on the provision of public services, humanitarian aid, and security during a civil war. Therefore, as elaborated above, financing and funding of local councils, their relations with armed groups, and provision of security are also significant determinants for obtaining legitimacy in the case of local councils. Moreover, some other factors including the existence of national-wide legal basement for the establishment and functioning of governance structures, the recognition of local administrative structures and their umbrella organizations each other and as well as the recognition from international community, representativeness of local people through normative processes like holding elections, and existence of different governance actors and competition among them are also quite critical for a full-fledged legitimacy. In this context, the issue of legitimacy regarding local councils in Syria can be assessed and analyzed in three dimensions. First of all, for further evaluation and analysis, it is necessary to keep in mind that whether there has been any legal basement for promoting and encouraging local administrative structures, known as provincial and local councils, in Syria. Secondly, the legitimacy of the umbrella organizations like the SOC, Syrian Interim Government, and provincial councils in the eyes of the international community including foreign governments, NGOs and as well as local councils is discussed. Finally, the legitimacy of local councils in the eyes of local people and military groups is handled in this section.

It is a fact that Assad's government has never lost control over a certain part of the country's territory throughout the Syrian crisis. The opponent armed groups were also denounced as "terrorist" and the "enemies of Syrian people" in order to

[374] Khalaf (2015: 42).

[375] Swisspeace, "Inside Syria: What Local Actors are Doing for Peace," January 2016, http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Mediation/Inside_Syria_en.pdf.

delegitimize them.[376] In the light of this fact, there is a crucial question to be asked: Is there any legal base for the political opposition who has strived to administer the areas held by the hands of civilians in order to derive a legitimate framework for their current activities and future goals. It is the Legislative Decree 107, known as local administration law, that many local councils were formed accordingly.[377] Most of the provisions of the Decree 107 had been adapted with small changes as a legal base for the establishment of new local councils by the provincial councils working under the Syrian Interim Government.[378] It was intended to transform local councils into more standardized governance structures and synch up their operations mainly based on Assad's local administration law.[379] Not only the Decree 107, but also some by-laws, which were put into practice by Assad's government, and other rules and regulations laid down by specialists and lawyers prepared in the legal offices of provincial councils have been used by local councils at the local level.[380] By all these efforts, the institutional and legal legitimacy of local councils were consolidated.

In fact, the Decree 107 was promulgated by Assad's government in August 2011, but it has not been put in practice. The decree was proposing a decentralized governance structure in Syria and requiring the transfer of political power from the central government to regional and local governance actors to some degree. Even though the perception regarding the role and authority of governance structures stated in the decree was different, it was welcomed by the government, opposition groups, and external powers, namely the US and Russia.[381] Even, the draft Syrian Constitution

[376] Merz (2014).

[377] Samer Araabi, "Syria's Decentralization Roadmap," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed 6 August 2017, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68372.

[378] Hajjar et al. (2017: 12).

[379] El-Meehy (2017: 9).

[380] Hajjar et al. (2017: 12).

[381] Samer Araabi, "Syria's Decentralization Roadmap," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed 6 August 2017, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68372.

suggested by Russia during the peace talks in Astana, Kazakhstan in January 2017 bears resemblances to the Decree 107 in terms of decentralization.[382] In this regard, due to the de facto existence of local councils on the ground, a decentralized governance model based on the Decree 107 is suggested for the post-civil war in Syria. The opposition had already leaned towards the adaptation of local councils to a decentralized governance model in Syria. Therefore, it is discussed that the Degree 107 can construct a legitimate base for local councils and provide a way out during the negotiations between the Syrian government and opposition groups.[383]

The other issue is about the legitimacy of the umbrella organizations like the SOC, Syrian Interim Government, and provincial councils from the perspective of international community and local councils on the ground. The SNC and then the succeeding umbrella organization, the SOC, has been recognized as a legitimate representative of Syrian people by dozens of countries, called "the Group of the Friends of Syrian People" including the US, EU, Britain, Turkey, and the Gulf States.[384] That was actually how those umbrella organizations became a hub through which international funds and humanitarian aid have been sent into Syria from formal ways. Nonetheless, the legitimacy of the umbrella organizations and their affiliated or sub-units had been limited within Syria. The disputes around the under-representation of local councils within the SOC, fragmented governance structures and divisions between external and internal bodies, the election for provincial councils held outside of Syria, dependence on foreign funds, mismanagement and corruption claims, and limited recognition and presence on the ground were the main factors that undermined the legitimacy of the umbrella organizations from the

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[382] See "Russian Draft Proposal For A New Syrian Constitution," Middle East Media Research Institute, Special Dispatch, No. 6775, accessed 9 August 2017, https://www.memri.org/reports/russian-draft-proposal-new-syrian-constitution.

[383] Samer Araabi, "Syria's Decentralization Roadmap," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed 6 August 2017, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68372.

[384] Sayigh (2013: 7 - 16).

perspective of local councils.[385]

First of all, besides being criticized for not representing all segments of the Syrian opposition, the Kurdish opposition groups in particular, the representation of the grassroots organizations including the LCCs and local councils were also unsatisfying within both the SNC and SOC. While the grassroots organizations constituted 35% of the 41 seats in the general secretariat of the SNC, it was only 20% in the general assembly of the SOC.[386] The local councils were represented by 14 seats out of 114 seats in the SOC, which was equal to the number of liberals and much lesser than the number of the representatives of the Muslim Brotherhood.[387] For this reason, there had often been disputes regarding the restricted representation of local councils despite their active presence in the field in Syria.

Secondly, one of the most salient legitimacy deficits of the umbrella organizations was stemmed from the fragmentary structure and division between external and internal governance structures. The umbrella organizations, both the SNC and SOC, Syrian Interim Government, and most of the provincial councils were founded abroad. Therefore, the ties of those external umbrella organizations and some of the provincial councils with local councils on the ground within Syria remained weak. This situation did not only obstruct the development of an effective hierarchical administrative mechanism but also led to the problem of legitimacy for the external structures from the perspective of local councils. In conjunction with the external and internal governance bodies, one of the important factors behind this legitimacy deficit is about the elections for some of the provincial councils held outside of Syria. For instance, due to security concerns and damaged infrastructure, the formation of Idlib's provincial council in January 2012 was based on the election

[385] *Ibid.,* p. 29.

[386] *Ibid.*, p. 15.

[387] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 24.

result held in Reyhanlı, Turkey.[388] The elections for al-Raqqa's provincial council in January 2013 in Urfa and for Aleppo's provincial council in March 2013 in Gaziantep were held in Turkey.[389] Also, the election for Daraa's provincial council was held in June 2013 in Cairo, Egypt.[390] Holding those elections outside of Syria caused the situation that local residents living in Syria did not know who represented them in the SOC and external provincial councils. Consequently, the provincial councils formed and the representatives of the provincial councils elected outside of Syria had less legitimacy, which limited the ability of those councils to establish healthful relations with the internal governance structures and to cooperate with NGOs and other civil society organizations.

Moreover, because the former external bodies could not enjoy sufficient political legitimacy among local councils operated in the field, the endeavors to integrate the administrative structures including the SOC and Syrian Interim Government outside Syria and the local councils within Syria has failed.[391] In addition to what is mentioned above, since the SOC were quite dependent on foreign funds, it was perceived that the SOC obtains its power from abroad and accordingly it is accountable to those foreign funders.[392] The unsatisfactory connection between the SOC and local councils contributed to this perception as well. Nevertheless, a more convincing reason behind the insufficient legitimacy of the external governance bodies in this context was the failure of the external actors to financially support local councils through the SOC and its units so that local councils could sustain the

[388] Menapolis, "Local Councils in Syria: A Sovereignty Crisis in Liberated Areas," September 2013, p. 10, http://menapolis.net/publications/files/1425551004pdf1SyriaLAC.pdf.

[389] *Ibid.*

[390] Institute for War and Peace Reporting, "Local Governance Inside Syria: Challenges, Opportunities and Recommendations," March 2014, p. 25, https://iwpr.net/sites/default/files/download/publication/iwpr_syria_local_councils_report_web.pdf.

[391] Abboud (2016: 68).

[392] Khalaf (2015: 51).

provision of various municipal services and maintain their independence from armed groups.[393] That is, as it is mentioned earlier, the critiques about mismanagement and unfair distribution of funding, aid, and donations through the SOC and its units, and the claims about corruption degraded the legitimacy of the umbrella organizations. For this reason, some local councils even refused the recognition of the umbrella organizations and the Syrian Interim Government while some others recognized at different levels.[394]

Finally, despite the weak link and unsatisfactory relations between the outsiders, SOC and Syrian Interim Government, and the insiders, namely local councils in Syria,[395] the efforts made by the outsider organizations to present themselves inside Syria also suffered due to the lack of a well-functioning coordination and cooperation mechanism. There were various reasons behind this fact including the geographically dispersed characteristic of local councils and constant shelling by the government forces. However, the limited coordination and cooperation with some local councils caused anger and disappointment among the members of those local councils. Therefore, many local councils, particularly those which are not located in the northern cities such as Aleppo and Idlib, remained quite autonomous. It is reported that only 15% of local councils adopted the legal and governing regulations made by the Ministry of Local Administration in the Syrian Interim Government.[396] While 65% of local councils have made their own regulations, 20% of the councils did not implement any regulations made by the Ministry.[397] As a result, many

[393] Abboud (2016: 68).

[394] See Samer Araabi, "Syria's Decentralization Roadmap," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, accessed 6 August 2017, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/68372.

[395] Hajjar et al. (2017: 22, 24).

[396] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

[397] *Ibid.*

critiques targeted the legitimacy of the SOC and Syrian Interim Government and their recognition as the representatives of local councils and people in Syria.[398]

The legitimacy of local councils in the eyes of local people is the other side of the coin. Recognized, contacted with, and financially supported by the international community including states and NGOs; the umbrella organizations and local councils enjoyed being the legitimate governance structures to a certain extent. However, since obtaining legitimacy was hinged on the provision of security and amount of finance and funds to operate more effectively, the problems with these issues mentioned in the previous parts of this chapter affected local councils in a negative way on the ground in point of gaining more legitimacy on the basis of performance and provision of security. Nevertheless, the evaluation of local councils' legitimacy from the public perspective is also quite dependent on the representativeness of their constituencies before anything else. Therefore, the problems with holding elections such as the inability of holding elections due to difficult circumstances and existence of alternatives ways in some areas, limited participation in elections due to security reasons, lack of electoral experience and technical inadequacy were the challenges of legitimacy for local councils. Moreover, the exclusion of women, youth and members of minority groups from local councils' governance departments, the spoiling role of radical armed groups, religious and community leaders on local councils' legitimacy and prestige, and the competition and duality in governance led by parallel (overlapping) institutions in the same areas were the other ostensible obstacles threatened the legitimacy of local councils.

Elections have been held to select the members of local councils, but it was not the case for each local council. The situation whether members of local councils took office with an election, or not and various problems with the elections undermined the legitimacy of local councils. For instance, in some towns and regions, members of local councils were not selected through elections. Instead, they were preferred by

[398] Hajjar et al. (2017: 22).

leaders of armed groups, tribal and clan structures.[399] According to a survey conducted amongst 105 local councils in the opposition-controlled areas (outside Syrian government, Islamic State, or Kurdish control) in the first months of 2016, while majority of the local councils, %57, formed through a consensus or agreement among local and tribal leaders, armed groups and revolutionary activists; the percentage of the local councils formed through elections is only 38%.[400] The survey also revealed that while %3 of the local councils were established through appointments, revolutionary activists were influential in forming only %2 of the local councils.[401]

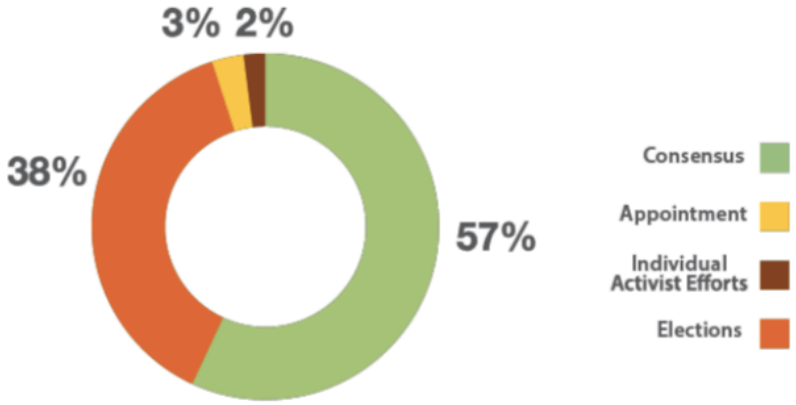

Figure 8. Formation Mechanisms of Local Councils[402]

It was a fact that because of the extraordinary circumstances, it was not easy to hold elections for all local councils. The insecurity and instability in Syria were the main barriers that prevented citizens to participate in elections. Some local councils were often shelled by the Syrian army, so many of the residents in those areas feared and

[399] Baczko et al. (2013: 7).

[400] Omran for Strategic Studies, "The Political Role of Local Councils in Syria - Survey Results," Istanbul: Omran, 1 July 2016, p. 3, http://omranstudies.org/publications/papers/the-political-role-of-local-councils-in-syria-survey-results.html.

[401] *Ibid.*

[402] *Ibid.*

hesitated to participate in elections. Not only the fear caused by the bombardment, but also the lack of electoral experience and technical inadequacy related with an electoral process including preparing the lists of candidates, legal arrangements, polling stations and counting were the other barriers in front of holding elections.[403] As a result of all these problems with holding elections, a consensus among the actors in the field including armed groups, tribal, local and religious leaders, and influential members of large families became the most applied mechanism.

In addition, the criteria to be elected or selected for the positions in executive bureaus of local councils were varied from region to region. In some regions, alongside the technical abilities, competence, experience, and education level; candidates were also asked to be a resident of the town or city, not being involved in any criminal or corruption activity, and being a supporter of the "revolution" and have no affiliation with the Syrian government.[404] However, the exclusionary characteristic of local councils in terms of representation and recruitment of women, youths, and members of minority groups was also criticized. It is reported that only 2% of local councils' staff are women in Syria.[405] The obstacles in front of women participation are given as insecure environment, lack of supportive initiative that encourage women participation, and the unwillingness of armed groups for the inclusion of women in the bodies of local councils.[406] On the other hand, the involvement of the age group between eighteen and thirty-five is 30% despite those in this age group pioneered the establishment of local councils at the initial phase.[407] Lastly, since the civil war in Syria polarized the ethnic and sectarian groups, the

[403] *Ibid*., p.4.

[404] Hajjar et al. (2017: 10, 11).

[405] El-Meehy (2017: 11).

[406] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

[407] El-Meehy (2017: 11).

inclusion of minority groups such as Christians and Alawites were quite less in local councils.[408]

The other problem is the spoiling influence of radical armed groups, religious and community leaders on local councils' legitimacy and prestige. In fact, tribal and local leaders were usually respected by both members of the community and armed groups. Since tribal and local leaders have often been the members of local councils, those councils benefited from the authority structures and legitimacy based on informal and customary links. Especially, while radical Islamic armed groups were using a religious discourse to gain local legitimacy, the membership of tribal and local leaders in local councils was significant. Thanks to their membership, the local councils had an influence on the local armed groups particularly in the rural places of Idlib and Deraa.[409] These community leaders were helpful in negotiations with armed groups. Thus, local councils were able to play an important role to convince armed groups in order to maintain access to humanitarian aid delivered by INGOs.[410]

Nevertheless, the influence of radical armed groups, religious leaders, and community leaders was sometimes negative on local councils and posed a direct threat to their legitimacy and prestige in some certain places where radical armed groups established their superiority over the moderate ones. For instance, the influence of unelected clerics on governance was reported in Manbij where religious armed groups took over the control from relatively moderate armed groups in 2013. The "revolutionary court" of the local council that had a relatively secular and liberal stance suffered due to the lack of fund and a police force to implement decisions and maintain order.[411] Therefore, a sharia court applying a more religious form of law replaced the "revolutionary court" of the local council. Since powerful Islamist

[408] *Ibid*.

[409] See Haddad and Svoboda (2017: 15 - 19).

[410] *Ibid.*

[411] Yassin-Kassab and Al-Shami (2016: 71).

armed groups backed sharia courts, in some places, relatively secular local councils had to merge with sharia courts within the formation of "sharia committees."[412] Having a reduced role, the local councils lost their legitimacy and prestige largely. As clerics were nominated by the Islamist armed groups for the head of sharia committees, the local councils in those places almost became executive parts of sharia committees.[413]

Lastly, the parallel (overlapping) institutions in the same areas and duality in governance created a type of hybrid political order as discussed in the second chapter and led to competition for gaining legitimacy. That is, briefly, when another police force or court is established by an armed group or civil authority in parallel with the similar institutions operated by local councils in the same field, then what would be inevitable is that the institutions belonging to local councils would lose a part of their legitimacy. To elaborate further, the role of armed groups and level of their cooperation with local councils were varied from place to place. While armed groups played a constructive role and collaborate with local councils in some locations, the competitive and disruptive characteristics of armed groups in some other locations, as it is mentioned in the previous section, undermined the legitimacy local councils could benefit. After the intensifying of the civil war, armed groups became more advantageous to access funds and weapons. Therefore, particularly religious-nationalist armed groups started to increase their influence on local councils and even they established their own governing bodies in some areas as previously mentioned. For instance, the armed groups including Ahrar al-Sham, the Army of Islam, the Syrian Islamic Liberation Front, and the Islamic Front established Islamic committees or Shura councils (majalis al-shura).[414] These administrative bodies enjoyed popular support since they were active in supplying bread that has been

[412] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 22 - 23.

[413] *Ibid.,* p. 22.

[414] Favier (2016: 13).

crucial during the civil war, providing justice through sharia courts and social order through police forces, and undertaking economic activities. In this regard, competition and confrontation with local councils sometimes became inevitable. However, local councils had no interest in colliding with those institutions backed by Islamic armed groups because they needed the security these armed groups provided. Also, they obviously needed to maintain healthy relations with these armed groups in order to continue their operations. Moreover, there were the Public Services Administration of Jabhat al-Nusra operated in some parts of Idlib and Aleppo, and the Civil Islamic Commission affiliated to Ahrar al-Sham performed mainly in Idlib province. [415] Therefore, local councils in those areas competed with these administrative bodies established by the religious armed groups in order to provide fundamental municipal services such as providing water, electricity, and as well as flour to bakeries.[416]

Likewise, relatively secular and sharia courts coexisted in some cases. Despite various attempts to unify the legal system based on Islamic law, a common code of law was not achieved.[417] In this circumstance, reference to Islamic law, that is sharia, was more practical to render the sentences as much as legitimate in the eyes of local people. As a result, radical Islamist groups took advantage of creating sharia courts in order to gain local legitimacy. Also, the sharia courts in many places like Al-Raqqa, Aleppo, and Deir-ez-Zur overstepped the bounds of providing justice on the basis of religious law. They offered other public services and interfered with local governance affairs as well.[418] By doing so, some religious armed groups intended to consolidate their own governance mechanisms through sharia courts rather than relying on local councils that had been perceived as more secular. In addition, some government institutions continued to operate in the rebel held-areas. For instance, the

[415] Favier (2016: 13, 14).

[416] *Ibid.*

[417] Baczko et al. (2013: 5 - 7).

[418] Khalaf (2015).

courts of Syrian state dealing with personal status documents like death and marriage certificates as the sole authority were active in parallel with the courts established by the opposition groups and handling criminal activities and disputes.[419] Also, after the loss of control in some areas, the Syrian government, for a while, continued to pay the salaries of civil servants in government institutions which already ceased to function.[420] It was mainly because Syrian government did not want to lose its legitimacy in those places. Lastly, it should be noted that the relations between local councils and NGOs were not always on the basis of cooperation. The role of NGOs does not sometimes comply with its "non-governmental" characteristic in the absence of a state mechanism. In such cases, NGOs have a tendency to carry out public services. In some areas under the control of the opposition, local councils and NGOs were operating in the same sectors such as the distribution of relief items, delivery of public goods and carrying out projects.[421] Therefore, in such areas, there was a competition over competency and authority between local councils and NGOs.

5.5. Effectiveness

Local councils were formed to fill the administrative gap and maintain daily lives of citizens in the absence of government institutions. In general, local councils undertook the roles regarding service, development, and politics. They were assumed to meet local needs, distribute humanitarian assistance, provide public services, and facilitate coordination among the NGOs, humanitarian aid organizations, and other actors dealing with governance activities. Local councils were responsible for the services such as opening makeshift schools and hospitals, distribution of relief materials and aid together with NGOs, supplying bread and flour, garbage collection, electricity and water supply, and maintaining social order and security through local police forces in some certain areas. While business and real estate deals were made

[419] Abboud (2016: 72).

[420] Baczko et al. (2013: 5).

[421] Hajjar et al. (2017: 21).

under the mandate of local councils, they also pioneered the formation of ad-hoc courts and syndicates. Moreover, local councils made public and political statements and organized protests.

In addition to all these, local councils played a role in conflict resolution and mediation between civil and military groups.[422] To give an example, after Ahrar al-Sham had seized fuel oil and sold it at high prices in Saraqip, the residents there went out and protested. Then, the local council in Saraqip mediated between Ahrar al-Sham and the residents and solved the problem by lowering the price of fuel oil.[423]

On the other hand, as a governance body, besides the offices for president and vice-president, local councils had the offices for funds and finance, humanitarian aid, public services, external relations, civil relations, media, education, medical, religious affairs, security, legal and civil defence, and project management.

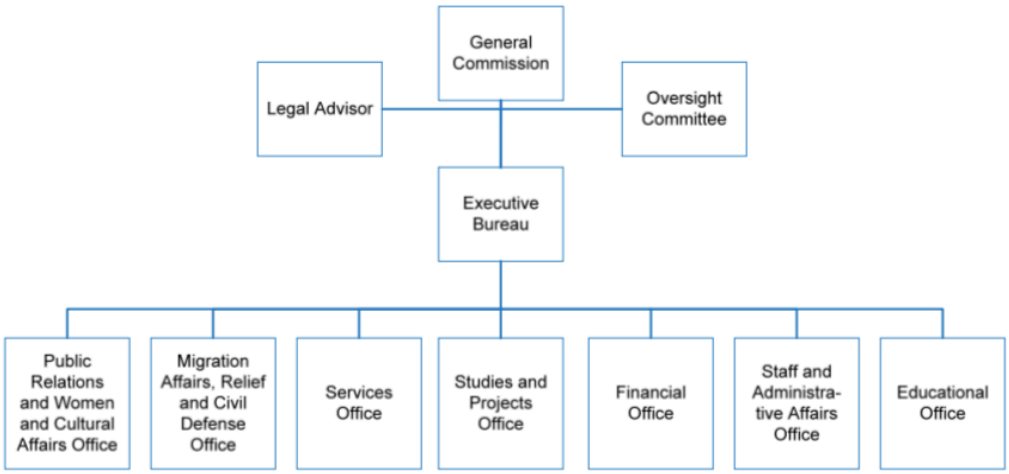

Figure 13. Example of a local council body (Zamalka)[424]

[422] Swisspeace, "Inside Syria: What Local Actors are Doing for Peace," January 2016, p. 12, http://www.swisspeace.ch/fileadmin/user_upload/pdf/Mediation/Inside_Syria_en.pdf. Also see, Haddad and Svoboda (2017: 15 - 17).

[423] Tristan Salmon, "Emerging civil administrations: a way forward in Syria," openSecurity, accessed 4 August 2017, https://www.opendemocracy.net/opensecurity/tristan-salmon/emerging-civil-administrations-way-forward-in-syria.

[424] Hajjar, et al. (2017: 8).

Nevertheless, the number and capability of those offices were not the same in each local council due to various reasons. For example, while both the local council in Qalaat al-Madiq (in the Hama Province, northern Syria) and Tasil (in Daraa Province, southern Syria) had 10 specialized offices; the local council in Douma (near Damascus) had 20 offices, 8 of which were administrative and 12 of which were for services.[425] Local councils might also have different offices whose specialization fields could be close to each other. For instance, while the local council in Douma had a civil registry office dealing with recording marriages, divorces, births, deaths, and also those who were killed, detained, and lost during the civil war; the local council in Tasil had a census office documenting the population of local residents including the number of the students living in the area.[426]

As stated earlier, local councils were developed at different stages. Their capacity and effectiveness varied across location and in time. The reasons behind this fact were mainly about economic hardships, security concerns, local circumstances, access to borders of the country, and the existence of competing structures. For instance, since the local councils in Aleppo and Idlib had direct access to Turkey and found support in the other side of the border, those councils became the most efficient ones.[427] However, the local councils located in Jordan's border could not find the satisfactory support from Jordan, so they remained weak and inefficient.[428] In fact, governance model of local councils was variable since their structure, size, and capacity varied from one city to another. Even though the SOC, Syrian Interim Government, and provincial councils made an effort to organize local councils in similar forms, it was not succeeded because some local councils refused to establish tight vertical ties with the umbrella organizations and wanted to remain partially or completely independent in some locations.

[425] Darwish (2016: 2).

[426] Darwish (2016: 3).

[427] Favier (2016: 12).

[428] *Ibid.*

Effectiveness in the provision of services and administrative affairs would create sympathy and increase the legitimacy of local councils. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of local governance structures was highly dependent on funding and financial issues, security and relations with armed groups, and the legitimacy derived from local population. That is, the challenges mentioned in the previous three sections can also be considered as the challenges in front of the effectiveness of local councils. Limited and irregularly received funds and restricted resources had an impact on the quality, continuity and the scope of local councils' functions and services. Therefore, the problems with funds and finance issues posed an obvious and direct threat to the effectiveness of local councils. Even though some local councils had continued to run the public services with different strategies despite limited funding and resources, these strategies were not sustainable. For instance, in the Aleppo, while municipal services were provided for a length of time by thousands of employees who worked without payment, teachers had been also supposed to be paid with a fixed salary of $25 per month, but actually many were not paid.[429] In addition, the compliance between armed groups and local councils was crucial. For example, the local councils in the places where the brigades from the FSA were located were more efficient since they were protected. They were also efficient in some unusual cases like Daraya where the armed groups acted as an arm of the local council.[430] As it is stated earlier, however, armed groups, particularly those had an Islamist identity, backed other competing governance structures like sharia courts in many cases. Moreover, aerial strikes and besieging strategies of the Syrian state against local councils, sudden handover and loss of regions, existence of radical Islamist armed groups regarded as "terrorist" by donors that prioritized the fight against terrorism rather than investment on local councils, various spoilers including war-lords and interest groups benefited from war economy, and

[429] Adam Baczko, Gilles Dorronso, and Arthur Quesnay, "The Civilian Administration of the Insurgency in Aleppo, Syria" International Peace Institute: Global Observatory, accessed 13 August 2017, https://theglobalobservatory.org/2013/11/the-civilian-administration-of-the-insurgency-in-aleppo/.

[430] Favier (2016: 13).

competition among these radical and moderate armed groups on the ground are significant factors that have a negative impact on the effectiveness of local councils. Ultimately, the debilitating issues with the legitimacy of local councils such as limited connection and cooperation between external umbrella organizations and local councils in Syria, debates on under-representation and elections, and overlapping institutions had also hampered local councils working efficiently. For instance, one can claim that local councils had never been the only governance body due to the existence of the other competing structures, armed groups, and NGOs.

Besides all these challenges previously stated in the domains of funding and finance, security and relations with armed groups, and legitimacy; there were some other difficulties hampered the effectiveness of local councils. Those difficulties were the inability of the umbrella organizations to present leadership for local councils, frequent elections and restructuring of local councils, relying on temporary personal networks to get support from other actors, the loss of initial enthusiasm, energy, and motivation due to extension of the civil war, internal tensions and debates arisen from the clashes of revolutionary activists with members of prominent families and community leaders, disregarding the principles of impartiality and accountability, lack of qualified officers, inadequate support for training and development of the local councils' staff, lack of equipment and logistical support.

Due to the ongoing civil war, the issue of governance had not come first for the umbrella organizations, the SNC and SOC. However, when the IS and Jabhat al-Nusra gained popularity through governance and service delivery, then the importance of local councils were realized well.[431] While the Syrian National Council had been criticized for being dysfunctional and isolated from the internal dynamics of Syria since it was founded, the SOC and Syrian Interim Government were supposed to unify the opposition and create a well-functioning administrative body. Even, the Local Administration Council Support Unit was founded to directly contribute to the effectiveness of local councils since its role was to provide the

[431] Baas (2016: 11).

services local councils need, to coordinate their activities, improve their capacity, and encourage the participation of civil actors in local council structures.[432] However, the failure of the SOC and Syrian Interim Government created a leadership problem. As it is explained earlier, the corruption claims, critiques about mismanagement of the SOC, and under-representation of local councils and other actors working on the ground in the SOC demonstrate that the umbrella organizations could not display an effective leadership for local administrative structures which are geographically dispersed across Syria.

Not being able to offer an effective leadership is not only the problem of the umbrella organizations, but it is also a problem for local councils. While high officers including president, vice-president, and members of executive bureaus in many local councils were authorized through "elections" for a period between 3 – 6 months, these durations were not enough to transform local councils into effective governance mechanisms.[433] As a result of frequent elections, many local councils turned into unstable governance structures. Disputes and power struggles during election processes sometimes ended up with deadlock, change of staff and rules, and ultimately "restructuring" of local councils.[434] For instance, the local council in Daret Ezzah restructured six times and the leadership changed each time, the local councils in Ma'aret al-Numan and Zamalka restructured four times, and the local council in Kafr Tekharim restructured six times.[435] Also, the local council in Nawa restructured nine times between 2013 and the end of 2016 because of the combat between armed

[432] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

[433] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 22.

[434] *Ibid.*

[435] Hajjar, et al. (2017: 9).

opposition groups and government, and also the combat among these armed opposition groups.[436] As a result, due to the lack of experience of new officers after every election period, those local councils remained devoid of effective leadership skills, and as well as of organizational memory and knowledge.

In addition, personal networks with donors, NGOs, aid organizations, military groups, and prominent families had a temporary positive impact on the running of local councils. For instance, some members of local councils were going to Hatay, Gaziantep, and Amman to make themselves known by NGOs and aid organizations, and as well as by the representatives of provincial councils.[437] Thanks to personal relations with those actors outside Syria, local councils were sometimes getting funds for projects and financial support to improve their efficiency in the short run. By doing so, it could be even claimed that local councils were being able to diversify their income sources. However, personal contacts did not provide a permanent source of income since the support continued as long as the person who had contacts continued to work for the local council. That is, it was not a sustainable economic support when the relations with donors, in particular, did not have an institutional base.

Further, the initial enthusiasm, energy, and motivation of local councils at the beginning of the conflict and even civil war had disappeared particularly because of the prolongation of the civil war, emergence of criminal and terror organizations, shortage of financial resources and funding, and the loss of the lands controlled by the "moderate" rebel armed groups; In the recent period, besides those which were forced to operate from neighboring countries due to shifting situation on the ground in Syria, some other local councils were either closed down or their scope of

[436] *Ibid.*

[437] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 11.

activities and functions had shrunk due to loss of initial enthusiasm and motivation which affected the effectiveness of those local councils negatively.

The internal tensions and debates arisen from the clashes of revolutionary activists with members of prominent families and community leaders resulted in ineffective governance as well. During the initial protests against the Syrian government, young activists were quite influential in organizing peaceful protests, using social media, engaging ad-hoc humanitarian aid activities, and so on. Those activists were also opposed to patriarchal structures and favoring more democratic local governance structures.[438] However, they did not have a satisfactory voice in the administration body, so many of them came out against local councils.[439] For instance, it is reported that particularly the youngest activists under forty years old were marginalized from the local council in Ma'aret al-Numan.[440] Despite serious shortcomings with water and electricity and damaged infrastructure due to aerial attacks, the issue of age had been debated in the town. The clash between younger activists and older leaders existed in Kafr Nabel as well, and this hindered focusing on infrastructure works including repairing the water system and power grid and reconstructing hospitals.[441] The level of cooperation and harmony between activists, community leaders and prominent members of large families was not sufficient.

Furthermore, the ineffectiveness of local councils was stemmed from disregarding the principles of impartiality and accountability in some cases. When an activist wanted to compete with a member of a prominent and large family in an election race, it is more likely the latter win the election just because of his crowded family or

[438] Menapolis, "Local Councils in Syria: A Sovereignty Crisis in Liberated Areas," September 2013, p. 7. http://menapolis.net/publications/files/1425551004pdf1SyriaLAC.pdf.

[439] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 22.

[440] Martin (2014: 22, 23).

[441] *Ibid.,* p. 23 - 25.

tribe. Also, military groups tended to support the members of those large families and tribes, so it was harder for activists to race in elections. Notwithstanding, there were claims regarding incompetency and inexperience of those elected and selected representatives backed by those influential families.[442] This was criticized since the persons without required education and experience caused ineffectiveness in administrative tasks of local councils. Therefore, the principle of impartiality and accountability was questioned in some local councils like that in Saraqip and those neighborhood councils in Aleppo.[443]

Another challenge was the lack of qualified officers in the administration bodies of local councils.[444] Indeed, it was not easy to find eligible and qualified people to employ or elect for the positions in local councils because many of those with well-education, experience, and technical competence left the country and those who had remained in the country preferred to work in the NGOs that offer higher salaries.[445] For example, while almost two-thirds of local councils did not have any specialized finance officer, one-fifth of local councils had one non-specialized finance officer with high school degree or less.[446]

Even though local councils needed specialized persons, the support for training and development of local councils' staff in terms of administration, planning, project management, budgeting, and finance was not adequate and efficacious. While less than 10% of local councils were supposedly receiving courses on local

[442] Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark, "Local Administration Structures in opposition-held areas in Syria," Research Report, April 2014, p. 21.

[443] *Ibid.*

[444] Tallaa (2017: 9).

[445] Hajjar, et al. (2017: 9).

[446] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

administration, more than half of those local councils claimed that the courses did not have a positive influence on the effectiveness of local councils.[447] Moreover, since there were courses which were given in neighboring countries, it was difficult for some members of local councils to get a passport, travel safely and cover traveling expense.[448]

Lastly, the lack of equipment and logistical support impeded the works that local councils could able to do. There was a need for medicines and vaccines for the healthcare particularly in Deir-ez-Zur and rural regions of Damascus and school equipment particularly in Homs and Daraa.[449] Moreover, to increase their administrative performance local councils needed office furniture such as tables and chairs, stationery equipment such as pens, papers, and draw tools, transport vehicles and fuel allowance, professional cameras, computers, and cyber internet devices.[450]

All in all, local councils evolved from grassroots organizations to alternative governance structures in the opposition-held areas of Syria. After the initial protests during the events of Arab Spring, they had turned into formal governance body of the political opposition and have carried out administrative and municipal tasks during the civil war. They have attempted to make life livable for local people who could not flee from the country. Through umbrella organizations and personal links, they got in touch with foreign governments, international and regional institutions, and civil society organizations including international NGOs and aid organizations. Despite their weakening trend compared to a few years ago, many local councils have continued to provide a wide range of services in their regions. However,

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[447] *Ibid.*

[448] *Ibid.*

[449] Local Administration Councils Unit (LACU) and Norwegian People's Aid Organization (NPA), "The Indicator of Needs for the Local Councils of Syria," Report of Public Policies, 2015, http://www.peacefare.net/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Needs-for-the-Local-Councils-of-Syria-Public-Policy-Report.pdf.

[450] *Ibid.*

because of the challenges and shortcomings in terms of funding and finance, security and relations with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness mentioned in this chapter, it can be asserted that local councils could not succeed to create safe and livable places for the residents of their areas. Particularly, because of the fragmented structure and external-internal division between the umbrella and local organizations, and disperse of local councils across Syria obstructed the formation of well-connected vertical and horizontal administrative structures in a hierarchical order. As a result, with all layers and components, it is unlikely to evaluate that local councils could be regarded as state-like governance structures.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The literature on failed state essentially focus on development and security issues, and the changes in political climate determine the emphasis on one of these issues more intensely. The relevant terms such as ‘weak’, ‘fragile’ and ‘collapsed’ had been already used to express the existed conditions of state failure. However, the concept ‘failed state’ first appeared at the end of the Cold War when state building endeavors, especially in the newly-established states on the remnants of the Soviet Union, neoliberal economic reforms, and the UN peacekeeping operations in the Third World gained momentum. However, on the other hand, economic and military assistance given by the US and USSR in order to keep weak states on their sides or provoke opponent agents in these countries discontinued in the post-Cold War. Therefore, it is discussed that the regimes in those weak states could not find resources to sustain control and order within their borders. As a result, they turned into failed states. Moreover, after Al-Qaeda’s 9/11 terrorist attack in the United States in 2001, the states labeled with ‘failed’ have been regarded as global security threats since they were seen as safe havens for terrorist groups, arms and drug trafficking, piracy activities, and source of refugee influx.

The concept ‘failed state’ has been controversial due to a variety of definitions based on different measurements and indicators, and the similar concepts that have been used interchangeably. Ontological and methodological critiques have joined with normative criticism since the concept ‘failed state’ was attracted by post-colonial studies. While the states labeled with ‘failed’ became a legitimate target for military intervention, the failure was also attributed to only internal reasons. Therefore, the concept has been criticized due to its ‘utility’ in foreign policies of powerful states and blaming citizens of failed states for the failure of the state regardless of colonial

background.

The definition and roles of a state are significant to understand dysfunctional and presumed "failed" states. Weber's definition of the state provides a good starting point for scholars who attempt to identify and explain main characteristics of failed states. Since states are portrayed as the governance structures that have monopoly over the means of violence and required to use these means legitimately within its own territory, it is assumed that civil war, loss of control over some parts of recognized territory, oppression and atrocities of ruling class, and existence of insurgency groups seeking for authority indicate state failure.

Nevertheless, most of the literature on failed states highlights the problems with state capacity, functions, and distribution of public goods. These are closely related to state institutions. That is, state institutions are responsible for provisions including security, rule of law, healthcare, education, infrastructure, monetary and financial system and many other administrative and social services. Thus, failed states are actually dysfunctional states from this vantage point since they can no longer perform the provision of these services well enough. Moreover, it is argued that continuation of absence or poor performance of state institutions in the provision of public goods leads to popular dissatisfaction and questions the legitimacy of rulers and government. Eventually, it leads violence and a breakdown in social cohesion. In this regard, ethnic, religious, and linguistic differences may make conflicts and civil wars more complicated.

As it is elaborated in the first chapter, the main characteristics of failed states reflected in the literature could be briefly explained as following: no legitimate monopoly over the means of violence; lack of trust and legitimacy in government and state; no control over some parts of territory, especially in peripheral regions; ethnic, religious, and linguistic tensions among opponent groups which can cause a breakdown in social cohesion; existence of competing insurgent groups for gaining power versus central authority which makes inroads into conflict and civil war;

posing regional and global threats via providing fertile ground for terrorism, piracy, drug trafficking, money laundering, refugee influx, etc.; breakdown in bureaucratic structure and state institutions as a result of the absence or poor performance in provision of rule of law, security, infrastructure, education and health services, other administrative and social services; economic depression and corruption; and lastly increase in authoritarianism, oppression of people, abuse of human rights and criminal activities.

What is reflected in the literature is that all these characteristics do not have to be available to label a state with 'failed'. It is simply because neither all 'failed states' become failed in the same way nor in the same degree.[451] Also, the "failed" characteristic of a state may not be constant since that state may go through a rough period in its history, but it can recover and get over later on.

Besides, in the zone of a presumed failed state where state institutions do not operate in some parts of the country, and a conflict or civil war exists, a variety of actors establishes complex relations and interacts with each other. A dozen of states, remnants of official state, or regime, national political elites both from opposition and pro-regime parties, intergovernmental organizations such as the UN and EU, a broad range of actors including civil society organizations, NGOs, grassroots movements, warlords, rebels, local governance structures established by civilians or armed groups, and so on... When the territory where state relinquished control due to conflict and civil war is observed; categorically two actors, namely civil society organizations, particularly international and national NGOs, and local governance structures are seen as prominent players whose activities are crucial for local people to move on their lives, get protection, acquire their basic needs, and respond their collective problems on the ground. Particularly the latter fills the authority and administrative gap to a certain extent.

From a general perspective, local governance structures provide security, judicial

[451] Gros (1996: 457).

system on the basis of customary and religious practices, basic goods, infrastructure services, and create relatively peaceful and predictable environments to a certain extent during conflicts and civil wars. Nevertheless, in terms of gaining legitimacy and augmenting effectiveness and scope of functions, both civil society organizations and local governance structures need to develop relations, interact and cooperate with each other. While working with local governance structures increases legitimacy and effectiveness of those external civil society organizations and provide a relatively secure and predictable environment for them, working with external organizations also helps local governance structures build up their capacities and be more effective, efficient and as well as accountable. Yet, it should not be forgotten that their legitimacy, effectiveness, and scope of functions change in different locations and times mainly due to security conditions and availability of valuable resources in the midst of conflict and civil war.

On the other hand, the literature on local governance structures derived from the cases of Chiapas, Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia, in which experiences of conflict and civil war exist, draw a general framework to comprehend emergence, characteristics and functions of local governance structures, and also behaviors and interactions of civilians and armed groups around these governance structures. While the notions like hybrid political order, institutional multiplicity, parallel governance, and governance without government, and the terms like rebelocracy and aliocracy provide an insight beyond the state-centric approaches of international relations, these notions and terms also represent de facto conditions of split sovereignty.

If a conflict or civil war continues for a long time in a country where state lost the control over the means of violence, and its formal institutions had already failed to function properly; then, it is likely that military forces of this state withdraw from peripheral areas of country, and national identity and citizenship perception are eroded. However, an imagination of anarchical or libertarian environment in the soil of such states is not true. While local people start to turn back to their tribal, ethnic, or religious and sectarian identities; non-state actors establish governance

mechanisms based on mainly customary practices under local leaders. Also, in some cases, insurgent and militia groups establish governance systems based on their ideology and political objectives, or they aim to become influential in decision-making bodies of any civil governance structure. Regardless of the identity founders of local governance structures have, that is whether they are civilians or members of armed groups, in both cases civilians and armed groups develop relations and interact with each other to some extents. In the case that civilians share the same ideology and purpose with armed groups, the formation of an alliance is likely.

The motivation behind the establishment of local governance structures can be local needs in the lack of state institutions, oppression of regime, political-ideological objectives, or the mixture of all these. Although local governance structures in wartime can be appreciated for the provision of security, customary law, basic services, and even protection of indigenous culture and tradition; in some cases, they are criticized for paving the way for decentralization, autonomy, and independence later on. Therefore, local governance structures contain the possibility of wearing out social cohesion in society and intensifying conflict and civil war in order to become autonomous administrations in the post-war period. In this case, since insurgent and armed groups take the advantage of conflict and civil war to achieve their political objectives, local governance structures are also regarded as a reflection of these objectives. This is one of the reasons why local governance structures are sometimes perceived as rival to a state by state-builders even though the opposite views exist in the same literature as well.

In the second half of this dissertation started with investigating the recent events in Syria in the light of all the previous theoretical discussions and experiences of Chiapas, Kosovo, Somalia, and Colombia. As a station of the Arab Spring protests, the unwillingness of Bashar al-Assad's government in Syria to introduce reforms and its attempt to repress the uprisings by using military force paved the way of the civil war in Syria. Because of the conditions created by the civil war Syria is recently presumed as a failed state. While the confrontation was initially seen between the

Syrian government and opposition, later on, the fragmented structure of the opposition consisting of moderate (secular), Islamist, and radical Islamist (jihadist) groups has been realized. On the other hand; Russia, Iran, thereby Hezbollah on the government side and the United States, Turkey, Qatar, and Saudi Arabia on the opposition's side have actively joined the war, but all of these countries publicly assert that they are against the Islamic State. When the Kurdish groups are also considered in northern Syria, the situation becomes as clear as mud.

While the civil war has been protracted; the ideological, sectarian, and ethnic tensions became more visible and the social cohesion has eroded in Syrian society. Sub-state armed groups have challenged the authority of the state and sought for establishing their own authority. Since these armed groups have controlled some parts of the country in which Syrian government and army had withdrawn, Syria has not been able to re-establish a monopoly over the means of violence, protect its territorial unity, provide security and a wide range of public services in these parts of the country. The Islamic State, PYD, and opposition forces applied their own governance systems in the areas they controlled. In these territories, being a Syrian has not made sense anymore, but instead, being a Sunni, Alawi and Kurdish have been more practical. As a result, the rebel groups motivated by sectarian and nationalist instincts have no longer considered Assad's government as the legitimate representative of all Syrian people. Moreover, since the IS and Jabhat al-Nusra are commonly regarded as terrorist organizations, it could be claimed that Syria turned into a safe haven for terrorist formations. Besides a huge number of deaths and internally displaced persons, and people in urgent need of humanitarian assistance; Syria has become a major source of refugee influx because of hosting a civil war and being a fertile ground for illegal and terrorist organizations. Hence, it has posed a global threat, too. Finally, due to all these reasons, Syria is ranked 4th among 178 states in terms of fragility and takes place in the category of 'very high alerts' according to the data provided by the Fragile State Index. As a result of these indicators, Syria is considered a failed state as it has been passing through a tough time in its history.

Furthermore, civil society organizations, NGOs, armed groups, warlords, extremist religious groups, criminal organizations, top-down and grassroots organizations have been active on the ground after Syria started to suffer from a civil war. As a grassroots organization, local coordination committees were firstly formed in many neighborhoods, towns and cities in order to organize protests, mobilize people to attend the protests in the uprisings period. These committees became the main nuclei behind the establishment of the other grassroots organization, namely local administrative councils. Both local coordination committees and local administrative councils gained a revolutionary and opponent characteristic because of their political standing against Assad's government. Omar Aziz, who is claimed to be the founder of the concept 'local councils', believed the refusal of state institutions for the success of the revolution and proposed local councils as the institutions that people could rely on to manage their daily activities during the revolution. Initially and partially local coordination committees and then more comprehensively local administrative councils have sought to fill the governance gap in the territories where Syrian army withdrew and state institutions ceased functioning.

In the initial phase, local councils were considered as ad-hoc grassroots organizations in villages, towns, and cities to meet the needs of local people. Local councils endeavored to distribute humanitarian assistance, provide various public services, ensure coordination among other actors dealing with governance activities, created ad-hoc courts, and so on. They have also carried out municipal duties such as opening schools, garbage collection, electricity and water supply. Local councils have different offices dealing with all these tasks. To a large extent, civilians took place in the administrative body of local councils, but there were uncivil components as well.

In order to support and coordinate the activities of large and small-size local councils and to ensure a unified and centralized governance framework, provincial councils were formed, and the administrative bodies such as LACU and ACU were established within the hierarchy of the SOC. Moreover, the Ministry of Local

Administration, Refugees, and Humanitarian Relief was created under the Syrian Interim Government. However; financial conditions, security concerns, local circumstances, access to the borders of neighboring countries, and the existence of competing structures caused variations in structure, size, effectiveness, and capacity of local councils. Thus, local councils in different locations do not show the characteristics of one single model of governance.

Local councils faced many challenges in terms of funding and finance, security and their relations with armed groups, legitimacy, and effectiveness. In fact, the development stage of a local council was substantially determined by the received funds and finance. The factors such as location, available natural resources, and the wealth of the former residents living abroad had an influence on revenues of local councils. The unfortunate local councils were those located in a besieged regions, had limited or absence of natural resources, and had a small number of expatriates who can make an economic contribution.

There were mainly seven challenges regarding funding and finance issues that local councils have faced. First of all, limited and temporary funding and finance and lack of resources had a negative impact on the quality and sustainability of services and administrative tasks. Secondly, because of the relations with armed groups, some donors were reluctant to give economic assistance. Since it was thought that the economic assistance would eventually benefit armed groups, they hesitated to get directly in touch with local councils and preferred to maintain their neutrality in the Syrian civil war. Thirdly, poor local councils tended to lose their independence to armed groups because some armed groups were better funded than local councils and able to provide basic services as well. Forth, due to the difficult living standards and high inflation during the civil war, different strategies of local councils such as levying taxes and charging a low fee for various public services failed. Fifth, many local councils were discontent with the role of the SOC and its units in delivering funds and aids to local councils. Also, the widespread claims regarding corruption within the SOC disturbed the members of local councils. Sixth, local councils had

difficulties to meet the conditions and criteria applied by donors to be a partner in conducting projects. Lastly, high dependence on foreign funds led donors to intervene in structure and functions of local councils.

In addition, local councils needed cooperation with armed groups to provide a secure environment in order to work effectively, maintain social order, and protect infrastructure systems besides their own administrative structures. Many young men and ordinary people took arms and joined armed groups in their areas because of military attacks, detainment, torture, and rape committed by Assad's government. This factor enabled local councils to establish relatively healthful relations with the local armed groups in some regions. Nevertheless, there were different relation patterns between local councils and armed groups in different regions stemmed from various local dynamics including limited fund and resources, competition over power, the existence of an active conflict and whether the region had been taken from government forces with or without a battle. Therefore, even though some local councils attempted to monopolize the means of violence by taking armed groups under their control, this was not achieved in the most of places. As a result of these patterns, aliocracy or rebelocracy as a form of social order could be observed in different places of the opposition-held areas.

The challenges regarding the provision of security and relationship with armed groups can be summarized as eight items: First, the dominance of armed groups in the administration bodies overshadowed the civilian characteristic of local councils in some cases. Second, due to the loose and fragmented structure of the armed opposition and other strategic reasons, military groups had been changing their sides and creating new alliances among themselves. When a military group backing a local council in one certain area changed its side and joined more radical armed coalitions, then that local council could lose its previous support from that military group. Thirdly, changing side could occur in the level of fighters as well. The irregular and partial payments of salaries and attraction of radical Islamist armed coalitions caused disengagement among the members of armed groups, like those who were in the

ranks FSA once upon a time. Forth, the shifting situation on the ground and sudden handover of lands among armed groups as a result of the competition over resources made things harder for local councils. The outcomes of these changes were an arrest, internally displacement of members of local councils, or forcing them leaving the country. Fifth, aerial strikes and besieging strategies of Syrian state over the local councils mainly located in the interior parts of the country highly affected the development stage, scope of functions, and number of local councils in these areas. Sixth, the endeavors to find institutional solutions such as forming and operating police forces and legal courts against increased criminal activities miscarried. Seventh, many activities of radical armed groups were competitive and disruptive. They either intervened in affairs of ad-hoc judicial courts or set up and backed sharia courts against relatively moderate and secular courts. The last, the enforcement of court judgments was difficult on the cases in which members of armed groups, even those relatively moderate ones, were on trial. When they were discontent with decisions of courts, they were easily joining other armed groups.

The issues regarding finance, funds, security, and relations with armed groups were undoubtedly significant in terms of local councils' legitimacy as well. Nevertheless, three dimensions need to be considered for evaluation and analyzing the legitimacy of local councils. The existence of any legal basement for promoting and encouraging provincial and local councils, the legitimacy of the umbrella organizations like the SOC, Syrian Interim Government, and provincial councils in the eyes of international community and local councils, and lastly, the legitimacy of local councils in the eyes of local people and military groups.

First of all, there was the intention to standardize local governance structures and to coordinate their activities. For that reason, the Legislative Degree 107 promulgated by Assad's government had been adopted with small changes, and many local councils were formed accordingly. Since the Degree 107 proposes decentralization of governance in Syria to a certain extent, a political solution in which provincial and local councils remain as a part of the decentralized state after the civil war has been

sought to negotiate. Therefore, the Degree 107 has been expected particularly by the political opposition in Syria to provide institutional and legal legitimacy for local governance structures.

Nevertheless, even though dozens of countries and international institutions recognized the SNC, SOC, and Syrian Interim Government; the legitimacy of these political umbrella organizations was undermined by various factors. These factors can be summarized as following: the under-representation of local councils within the SNC and SOC despite their active presence on the ground in Syria; the fragmented governance structures and divisions between external and internal bodies; the election for provincial councils held outside of Syria; the perception that the umbrella organizations of the political opposition is accountable to donors abroad due to their dependence on foreign funds; the mismanagement and unfair distribution of funding, aid, and donations through the SOC and its units; and finally the limited presence and as well as recognition of the umbrella organizations, namely the outsiders, on the ground within Syria because of the deficiencies with coordination and cooperation between the outsider political opposition and besieged local councils in Syria.

On the other hand, the challenges threatened the legitimacy of local councils from public perspective can be briefly mentioned as following: the problems with holding elections such as inability of holding elections and existence of alternatives ways in formation of local councils in some areas; limited participation in elections due to security reasons and unstable circumstances; lack of electoral experience and technical inadequacy in terms of preparation of the lists of candidates, legal arrangements, polling stations and counting; exclusion of women, youth and members of minority groups from local councils' administrations; spoiling and disruptive roles of radical armed groups, religious and community leaders on the legitimacy and prestige of local councils; and lastly the overlapping institutions and hybrid governance in some areas, and consequently the inevitable competition and confrontation among different governance mechanisms.

Finally, the challenges and obstacles regarding the issues of funding and finance, security and relations with armed groups, and legitimacy had also a negative impact on the effectiveness of local councils. Besides these, there were other challenges hampered the effectiveness of local councils as well. They can be summarized as following: inability of the umbrella organizations to present leadership for local councils; instability led by frequent elections and reconstructing of local councils; relying on temporary personal networks to get support from other actors despite temporary advantages; loss of the initial enthusiasm, energy, and motivation due to extension of the civil war; internal tensions and debates arisen from the clashes of revolutionary activists with members of prominent families and community leaders; disregarding the principles of impartiality and accountability; lack of qualified officers in the administration mechanism of local councils; inadequate support for training and development of local councils' staff; and lastly, lack of equipment and logistical support.

The evolution of local councils from the grassroots organization to alternative governance structure of the political opposition is an impressive episode started during the events of Arab Spring and lasted with a civil war. Doubtlessly, the role of local councils during the civil war can be appreciated since they have endeavored to make life livable to some extent for local people who could not leave everything behind and flee from the country because of various reasons. The councils continue to provide key services in their regions when this dissertation is written. Nevertheless, despite all the valuable contributions in the domains of services and governance, local councils could not manage to establish secure and livable places for the locals in the opposition-held areas. The efforts to create vertical and horizontal administrative structures have not brought to a satisfactory outcome particularly due to the fragmented structure and division of external and internal political opposition groups. A central hierarchy in terms of finance and security could not found. Consequently, local councils have not achieved to be considered as state-like structures because of the all challenges explained in this dissertation.

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APPENDIX A

TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

‘BAŞARISIZ’ OLARAK NİTELENDİRİLEN BİR DEVLETTE ULUSLARARASI VE YEREL YÖNETİM AÇIĞINI GİDERME: SURİYE’DE MUHALİFLERİN KONTROLÜNDE OLAN BÖLGELERDEKİ YEREL KONSEYLER

Bu tezin amacı iç savaş döneminde Suriye’de ilk olarak dağınık ve halk tabanlı olarak ortaya çıkan yerel konseylerin fon ve finans, güvenlik ve militer gruplarla ilişkileri, meşruluk, ve etkililik bakımından eksikliklerini ve karşılaştıkları zorlukları ortaya koymaktır. Bunu yaparken, başarısız devlet olgusundan yola çıkar. Başarısız devlet teriminin nasıl ortaya çıktığını, devlet kurumlarının işlevsiz kalma durumundan yola çıkarak başarısız devletin literatürde nasıl tanımlandığını, özelliklerinin neler olduğunu ve başarısız devlet literatürüne yöneltilen eleştirileri inceler. Daha sonra, devleti merkeze alan Uluslararası İlişkiler yaklaşımlarının ötesine geçerek devlet başarısızlığından sonra ortaya çıkan aktörleri ve bu aktörlerin yönetim boşluğunu nasıl doldurduklarına odaklanır. Özellikle sivil toplum kuruluşlarının ve ortaya çıkan yerel yönetim yapıları üzerinde durulur. Chiapas, Kosova, Somali ve Kolombiya gibi geçmişte çatışma ve iç savaş yaşamış devletlerin tecrübeleri göz önünde bulundurulur. Tezin ikinci bölümünde, Suriye’de Arap Baharı sürecindeki protestoların önce çatışmaya ve daha sonra ise iç savaşa dönüştüğü belirtilerek gelinen noktada neden Suriye’nin artık başarısız bir devlet olarak nitelendirildiği anlatılır. Çatışma ve iç savaş sürecinde Suriye’de yerel yönetim konseylerinin ortaya çıkması ve evrimiyle beraber yetersiz kaldıkları durumlar ve karşılaştıkları zorluklar açıklanır.

Başarısız devlet üzerine olan literatür genelde kalkınma ve güvenlik konularına yoğunlaşmıştır ve politik iklimdeki değişimlere göre bu iki konudan biri belirli zamanlarda daha çok ön plana çıkmıştır. Başarısız devlet kavramı ortaya atılmadan önce de aynı şartları yansıtmak için zayıf, kırılgan, çökmüş ve benzeri ifadeler kullanılmıştır ve kullanılmaya da devam edilmiştir. Başarısız devlet kavramı ise ilk olarak Soğuk Savaş sonlarında ortaya atılmıştır. Bu dönem Sovyetler Birliği'nin çöküşüyle beraber ortaya çıkan yeni devletlerin neoliberal reformlarla tanıştırılmaya çalışıldığı ve Üçüncü Dünya diye tabir edilen ülkelerde Birleşmiş Milletler barışı koruma operasyonlarının arttığı bir dönemdir. Aynı dönem yine Amerika Birleşik Devletleri ve Sovyetler Birliği'nin zayıf devletleri kendi taraflarında tutmak veya muhalif grupları kışkırtmak için yaptıkları ekonomik ve askeri yardımların durmuş olduğu bir dönemdir. Özellikle bu devletler açısından yardımların durması kendi sınırları içinde kontrol ve düzeni sağlamak için kaynak bulamamalarına neden olduğu ve bu nedenle başarısız devletler olarak lanse edildikleri de literatürde not edilmiştir. El-Kaide'nin 11 Eylül 2001 tarihinde ABD'de gerçekleştirdiği terör saldırısından sonra ise başarısız olarak nitelendirilen devletler daha yoğun bir şekilde küresel güvenliğe tehdit olarak algılanmışlardır. Bunun da en temel nedeni terörist gruplara ev sahipliği yapmaları, silah, uyuşturucu ve korsancılığın güzergahı olmaları ve mülteci krizlerine yol açmalarıdır.

Alternatif yakın anlamlı birçok kelimenin 'başarısız' yerine kullanılması dışında başarısız devlet kavramının farklı ölçüm ve faktörlere dayanılarak yapılmış birçok tanımı da yapılmıştır. Ontolojik ve metodolojik olarak yöneltilen eleştirilere ek olarak başarısız devlet kavramı normatif eleştirilerden de payını almıştır. Başarısız diye nitelendirilen devletlerin askeri müdahale için meşru hedef haline geldikleri ve bu durumun güçlü devletlerin dış politikasında kolaylaştırıcı bir rol oynadığına dikkat çekilir. Ayrıca, devlet başarısızlığın genellikle sadece iç nedenlere bağlanmasıyla aslında o devletin vatandaşlarının suçlandığı özellikle sömürgecilik sonrası çalışmalarda dikkat çeken bir tartışmadır.

Devlet başarısızlığını tanımlamak için sıklıkla Weber'in devlet tanımından yola çıkılmıştır. Weber'e gore devlet kendi sınırları içinde tekel olarak şiddet kaynaklarını meşru kullanma hakkına sahip otoritedir. Buradan hareketle, devletin belli bir toprak parçasında kontrolü kaybetmesi, devlete karşı kendi otoritelerinin kurmak isteyen devlet-altı aktörlerin türemesi, iç savaş ve yönetici sınıfın baskı ve zulümlere yol açan uygulamalara başvurması başarısız devletin göstergelerinden olduğu tartışılır.

Bununla birlikte devletin fonksiyonları ve kapasitesiyle ilgili problemler de başarısızlığa yol açabilir. Başarısız olarak nitelendirilen devletlerin güvenlik, hukukun üstünlüğü, eğitim, sağlık, altyapı hizmetleri, kamu mallarının dağıtımı, bankacılık ve finans sistemleri, ve diğer yönetimsel ve sosyal görevlerini yerine getiremediği veya bu görevleri yerine getirmede yetersiz bir performans gösterdiği gözlemlenir. Uzun vadede bu durum kitlesel memnuniyetsizliğe ve yöneticilerin meşruiyetinin sorgulanmasına yol açar. Sonuç olarak şiddet olayları ve hatta iç savaş ortaya çıkabilir. Bu noktada etnik, dini ve dilsel farklılıkların çatışma ve iç savaşın daha da yoğunlaşmasına neden olarak sosyal bütünlüğe zarar verebileceği tartışılmıştır.

Literatürde bir devleti başarısız olarak nitelendirmek için tüm bu bahsedilen özelliklerin aynı anda mevcut olması gerekmediği görülür. Nitekim tüm "başarısız" devletler aynı şekilde başarısız olmadıkları gibi aynı derecede de başarısız değillerdir. Ayrıca, bir devlet tarihinde oldukça zor bir dönemden geçebilir ve bu dönemde başarısız olarak nitelendirilse bile bu sabit bir niteleme değildir ve şartların değişmesiyle başarısız etiketi ortadan kalkabilir.

Diğer yandan, devlet kurumlarının çatışma ve iç savaştan dolayı işlemediği bölgelerde birçok aktör karmaşık ilişkiler kurarak birbiriyle etkileşim halinde olabilir. Bu aktörler yabancı devletler, resmi devletin veya rejimin kalan temsilcileri, rejim yanlısı veya muhalif partiler, BM veya AB'nin temsilci kuruluşları, kalkınma ajansları ve halk tabanlı oluşumları da içeren birçok sivil toplum kuruluşu, bölgesel

savaş beyleri, isyancı gruplar, militer gruplar ve siviller tarafından kurulan yerel yönetim yapıları olabilir. Bunlar içinde sivil toplum kuruluşları ve yerel yönetim yapılarının aktiviteleri o bölgede yaşayan insanların günlük hayatlarını devam ettirebilmeleri, güvenlikleri ve temel ihtiyaçlarını sağlamaları ve ortak problemlerine çözümler bulmaları açısından oldukça önemlidir. Özellikle yerel yönetim yapıları otorite ve yönetimsel boşluğu doldurmaya çalışırlar.

Genel bir perspektiften bakıldığında, yerel yönetim yapıları çatışma ve iç savaş dönemlerinde belli bir dereceye kadar güvenlik, geleneksel veya dini pratiklere dayalı geçici yargı düzeni, temel ihtiyaç malzemeleri, altyapı hizmetleri ve göreceli olarak daha az çatışmalı ve öngörülebilir bir ortam sağlayabilir. Bununla birlikte, meşruluk kazanma, etkililiği ve faaliyet kapsamını arttırma bakımından yerel yönetim yapıları sivil toplum kuruluşları arasındaki ilişkiler ve işbirliği çift yönlü önem arz eder. Yerel yönetim yapıları özellikle yabancı kalkınma ve yardım ajanslarının meşruluk ve etkililiğini arttırır ve onlara daha güvenli ve öngörülebilir bir ortam sağlar. Diğer taraftan, yabancı ajans ve kuruluşlarla çalışmak yerel yönetim yapılarının kapasitelerini geliştirmekle beraber, etkililik ve verimliliklerini de arttırır ve daha hesap verilebilir olmalarına katkıda bulunur. Her şeye rağmen, çatışma ve iç savaş ortamında yerel yönetim yapıları meşruluk, etkililik ve faaliyet kapsamları, güvenlik ve finansal kaynaklar başta olmak üzere birçok faktöre bağlı olarak yer ve zamana göre değişiklikler gösterir.

Çatışma ve iç savaş tecrübelerine sahip Chiapas, Kosova, Somali ve Kolombiya'da ortaya çıkan yerel yönetim yapıları üzerine olan literatür bu yönetim yapılarının ortaya çıkması, özellikleri, fonksiyonları, ve ayrıca bu yönetim yapıları etrafındaki sivil ve militer grupların etkileşimlerinin anlaşılması hususunda genel bir çerçeve sunar. Aynı zamanda, bu literatür hibrit politik düzen, kurumsal çeşitlilik, paralel yönetim, "rebelocracy" ve "aliocracy" gibi egemenliğin bölüşülmesiyle ilgili olan geniş bir kavram ve terim yelpazesi sunarak Uluslararası İlişkiler'in devlet merkezli yaklaşımlarının ötesinde bir anlayış sunar.

Genel olarak, çatışma ve iç savaşın uzun sürdüğü durumlarda devlet kurumlarının işlevini kaybetmesinin ve bazı bölgelerde devlet otoritesinin sona ermesinin yanı sıra milli kimlik ve vatandaşlık kavramları da tahrip olur. Böyle bir durumun anarşik veya özgür bir ortam yaratacağı varsayımları da yanlıştır. Yerel halk etnik, kabile veya mezhepsel daha alt kimliklerine yönelirken devlet dışı aktörler geleneksel pratiklerine dayanan yönetim yapıları kurabilir. Ayrıca, isyancı ve militer gruplar da kendi ideoloji ve siyasi hedefleri doğrultusunda yönetim mekanizmaları oluşturmayı, veya sivil yönetim yapılarının karar organları üzerinde etkili olmayı amaçlayabilirler. Her durumda, sivil ve militer gruplar bir ilişki ve etkileşim içinde olur. Sivillerin militer gruplarla aynı ideoloji ve amaçları paylaşması durumunda bir birlik durumu söz konusu olur.

Yerel yönetim yapılarının kurulmasının arkasındaki motivasyon devlet kurumlarının yokluğunda yerel ihtiyaçları karşılama, rejim baskısı, siyasi ve ideolojik amaçlar, veya tüm bunların bir karışımı olabilir. İç savaş sırasında yerel yönetim yapıları güvenliği sağlama, temel ihtiyaçlara cevap verme, geçici mahkemeler kurma, ve hatta kültür ve gelenekleri koruma gibi işlevlere sahip olsa da devlet yapısında özerkliğe ve hatta bazı unsurların bağımsızlığına yol açabileceklerinden dolayı eleştirilmektedir. Bu nedenle, yerel yönetim yapıları çatışma ve iç savaş sırasında sosyal bütünlüğü bozarak savaş sonrası dönem için bir statü elde etmeyi amaçlayabilir. Bu bağlamda, savaş zamanlarındaki yerel yönetim oluşumları isyancı ve militer grupların çıkarlarına hizmet eder. Zaten devlet inşası literatüründe bu yönetim oluşumlarının devlete rakip olarak görülmesinin nedenlerinden biri de budur.

Tezin ilk iki bölümündeki teorik tartışmalardan ve bazı devletlerin tecrübelerinden yola çıkılarak üçüncü bölümde Suriye'deki Arap Baharı süreci ile gelişen olaylar ve sonrasında Suriye'nin başarısız bir devlet olarak nitelendirilmesi incelenir. Beşar Esad hükümetinin reform konusundaki isteksizliği ve göstericilere askeri güçle cevap vermesi iç savaşa giden yolu döşeyen faktörlerdi. İç savaş koşulları Suriye'nin başarısız bir devlet olarak nitelendirilmesine zemin hazırladı. İç savaşın

uzaması hükümetle çatışan muhalif grupların ılımlı, İslamcı, ve radikal İslamcı olarak açıklanabilecek parçalı yapısını açığa çıkardı. Diğer taraftan, Rusya ve İran Suriye hükümetin yanında yer alırken Amerika, Türkiye, Katar ve Suudi Arabistan muhaliflerin safında yer aldılar. Tüm bu ülkelerin karşı olduklarını açıkça beyan ettikleri tek oluşum ise IŞİD idi. Kendi politik çıkarlarını takip eden Suriye'nin kuzeyindeki Kürtlerin de denkleme katıldığı düşünülürse Suriye'deki durum kısa sure içinde içinden çıkılmaz bir hal aldı.

İç savaşın uzaması; ideolojik, etnik, ve mezhepsel ayrılıkları daha görünür kıldı ve Suriye'de sosyal bütünlük zarar gördü. Silahlı gruplar kendi otoritelerini kurmak için devletin otoritesini sarstılar. Bu silahlı gruplar Suriye ordusunun çekildiği bazı alanlarda kontrolü ele aldılar. Bu durum Suriye'nin devlet olarak şiddet araçları üzerindeki meşru otoritesini kaybettiğini, toprak bütünlüğünü koruyamadığını, vatandaşlarının güvenliğini sağlayamadığını göstermiştir. IŞİD, YPG ve muhalif gruplar kontrol ettikleri bölgelerde kendi yönetim sistemlerini kurdular. Böylece, özellikle bu bölgelerde Suriyeli kimliği yerini Sünni, Alevi ve Kürt kimliklerine bıraktı. Mezhepsel ve milliyetçi motivasyona sahip isyancı gruplar Esad hükümetini tüm Suriyelilerin meşru temsilcisi olarak kabul etmeyi reddettiler. IŞİD ve el-Nusra terör örgütleri olarak kabul edilirken Suriye terör örgütleri için güvenli bir limana dönüştüğü vurgulandı. Çok sayıda hayatını kaybeden, ülke içinde yerinden edilmiş ve acil insani yardıma muhtaç insanın olmasının yanı sıra, Suriye yasadışı ve terörist oluşumlara zemin hazırlayan ve iç savaştan dolayı büyük bir mülteci krizine kaynaklık eden bir ülke imajına sahip oldu. Bu nedenle de küresel güvenlik için bir tehdit olarak görüldü. Sonuç olarak, Suriye kırılganlık bakımından 178 ülke arasında en kırılgan dördüncü ülke olarak "çok yüksek alarm veren" kategorisine girdi. Tarihinde çok zor bir dönemden geçerken Suriye tüm bu bahsedilen nedenlerden dolayı başarısız bir devlet olarak nitelendirildi.

Diğer taraftan, sivil toplum ve kalkınma kuruluşları, silahlı çeteler, savaş ağaları, suç örgütleri, radikal dini gruplar ve halk tabanlı örgütlenmeler Suriye'de iç savaşın başlamasıyla daha görünür hale geldiler. Halk tabanlı bir örgüt olarak önce birçok

mahalle, kasaba ve şehirde protestoları organize etmek ve halkın bu protesto gösterilerine katılmasını sağlamayı amaçlayan yerel koordinasyon komiteleri kuruldu. Bu koordinasyon komiteleri yerel yönetim konseylerinin (kısaca 'yerel konseyler') oluşmasında temel faktör oldular. Hem yerel koordinasyon komiteleri hem de yerel yönetim konseyleri Esad hükümetine karşıt bir politik duruşa sahip oldukları için devrimci ve muhalif karakterdedirler. 'Yerel konsey' kavramının fikir sahibi olduğu iddia edilen Omar Aziz Suriye'de gerçekleştirilmeye çalışılan "devrimin" başarılı olabilmesi için halkın devlet kurumlarını reddetmesi gerektiğini ve bunun yerine gündelik hayatlarını devam ettirmelerini mümkün kılmak için yerel konseylerin kurulması gerektiğini belirtmiştir. Aslında, ilk olarak ve kısmen yerel koordinasyon komiteleri yönetim ve idari işleri yürütmeye çabalamıştır. Fakat daha sonra Suriye ordusunun çekildiği ve devlet kurumlarının işleyişinin durduğu yerlerde asıl amacı zaten yönetim ve idari işleri yürütmek olan yerel yönetim konseyleri oluşturulmuştur.

Yerel konseyler başlangıçta halkın temel ihtiyaçlarını karşılamak için köy, kasaba, ve şehirlerde geçici halk tabanlı oluşumlar olarak değerlendirildiler. İnsani yardımı ihtiyaç sahiplerine ulaştırmak, çeşitli kamu hizmetlerini sağlamak, sivil toplum ve kalkınma kuruluşlarıyla iletişime geçip onlara rehberlik yapma ve bu kuruluşlar arasında koordinasyonu sağlama, geçici mahkemeler kurma, eğitim faaliyetlerini sürdürmek için okulları tekrar açma, elektrik ve su tedariki gibi işler yerel konseylerin yerine getirmeye çabaladığı görevler arasındadır. Yerel konseylerin yönetim yapısı büyük ölçüde sivillerden oluşmasına rağmen sivil olmayan unsurlarında yönetime aktif olarak katıldıkları ve belli yerlerde oldukça etkili oldukları gözlemlenmiştir.

Zamanla yerel konseylerin çoğu sistematik bir şekilde Suriyeli siyasi muhaliflerinin temel yönetim ağına dönüştü. İrili ufaklı yapıda birçok yerel konseyin faaliyetlerini desteklemek ve koordine etmek, kontrol edilen bölgelerde daha merkezi ve bütüncül bir yönetim çerçevesi sağlamak amacıyla bölge konseyleri kuruldu. Bununla beraber, Suriye Muhalif ve Devrimci Güçler Ulusal Koalisyonu (kısaca Suriye

Muhalif Koalisyonu) çatısı altında Yerel Yönetim Konseyi Destek Birimi ve Destek Koordinasyon Birimi kuruldu. Ayrıca Suriye Geçici Hükümeti'ne bağlı Yerel Yönetim, Mülteciler ve İnsani Yardım Bakanlığı kuruldu. Tüm bu gelişmelere rağmen, finansal koşullar, güvenlik kaygıları, yerel şartlar, komşu ülkelerin sınırlarına erişim ve rekabet eden farklı yapıların mevcut olması gibi durumlar yerel konseylerin büyüklük, etkililik, kabiliyet ve kapasite olarak birbirinden farklı olmalarına zemin hazırlamıştır. Bu nedenle, farklı bölgelerdeki yerel konseyler tek bir yönetim modelinin benzer özelliklerini taşımamaktadır.

Yerel konseyler çatışma ve iç savaş koşullarında fon ve finans, güvenlik ve silahlı gruplarla ilişkiler, meşruluk ve etkililik bakımından birçok sorunla karşılaştılar. Mesela, bir yerel konseyin gelişim seviyesi önemli derecede aldığı fonlar ve finans kaynaklarına bağlıydı. Yerel konseyin konumu, sahip olduğu doğal kaynaklar, komşu ve yabancı ülkelere göç etmiş eski sakinlerinin zenginliği ve maddi yardımları yerel konseylerin gelirleri üzerinde oldukça etkiliydi. İç kesimlerde kuşatılmış bölgelerde yer alan, az veya herhangi bir doğal kaynağa sahip olmayan ve yurt dışında yardım gönderecek az sayıda eski sakini bulunan yerel konseyler maddi açıdan talihsizdi, denilebilir.

Fon ve finans bakımından yerel konseylerin karşılaştığı yedi meseleden bahsedilebilir. İlk olarak, yeterli kaynaklara sahip olmamakla beraber az ve yetersiz finansman hizmetlerin ve idari işlerin kalitesini ve sürdürülebilirliğini olumsuz yönde etkiledi. İkinci olarak, yerel konseylerin silahlı gruplarla ilişkilerinden dolayı bazı bağışçılar ekonomik yardımda bulunma konusunda isteksizdi. Bunun temel nedeni, verdikleri ekonomik yardımın silahlı unsurlara yarayacağını ve bu durumun Suriye iç savaşında sahip oldukları tarafsızlık ilkesine zarar vereceğini düşünmeleridir. Üçüncüsü, bazı silahlı gruplar ekonomik açıdan daha fazla fon ve yardım aldıklarından dolayı özellikle maddi açıdan zayıf yerel konseyler bu silahlı gruplardan tamamen bağımsız olarak hareket edemediler. Çeşitli hizmetleri sağlayabilmek ve devam ettirebilmek için silahlı gruplara bağımlı hale geldiler. Dördüncüsü, iç savaş sırasındaki yüksek enflasyon ve zor hayat şartlarından dolayı

bazı yerel konseylerin uyguladıkları vergi koyma ve belirli kamu hizmetlerinden düşük bir ücret talep etme gibi stratejileri başarısız oldu. Beşincisi, birçok yerel konsey Suriye Muhalif Koalisyonunun ve birimlerinin gelen fonları ve ekonomik yardımları yerel konseylere aktarmada üstlendiği rolden memnun değildi. Ayrıca, Suriye Muhalif Koalisyonu içindeki yolsuzluk iddiaları yerel konseylerin temsilcilerini rahatsız etti. Altıncı, yerel konseyler donörlerin çeşitli projelerde beraber çalışabilecekleri partnerleri seçmek için koyduğu şartları ve kriterleri karşılamada zorluk çektiler. Son olarak, yüksek derecede yabancı fonlara bağımlılık donörlerin yerel konseylerin yönetim yapılarına ve fonksiyonlarına karışmasına neden oldu.

Yerel konseyler güvenli bir ortamda daha etkili ve verimli çalışmak, sosyal düzeni sağlamak, alt yapı sistemlerini ve hatta kendi yönetim yapılarını korumak adına silahlı gruplarla işbirliğine ihtiyaç duydu. Birçok sıradan insan, özellikle gençler, Esad "rejimi" tarafından yapılan askeri saldırılar, tutuklamalar, işkence ve tecavüzlerden dolayı silahlarını alıp kendi yaşadıkları bölgelerdeki militer gruplara katıldılar. Bu durum aslında birçok bölgede sivillerin kurduğu yerel konseylerle yerel silahlı gruplar arasında sağlıklı sayılabilecek bir ilişkinin oluşmasını sağladı. Yine de yerel konseyler ve silahlı gruplar arasındaki ilişki biçimi yetersiz fon ve kaynaklar, güç mücadelesi, aktif bir çatışmanın bulunup bulunmaması veya bölgenin savaşılarak mı veya çatışma yaşanmadan mı Suriye ordusundan alındığı gibi faktörler tarafından etkilenmiştir. Bu nedenle, birkaç yerel konsey silahlı grupları kendi askeri gücü gibi kullanarak şiddet araçları üzerinde üzerlerinde kontrol sağlamayı amaçlamış olsa bile çoğu bölgede silahlı gruplar üzerinde kontrol sağlanamadı. Bölgelere göre değişen farklı ilişki biçimleri sonucunda Arjona'nın ifadesiyle 'rebelocracy' ve 'aliocracy' gibi sosyal düzen formlarının ortaya çıkması söz konusu olmuştur.

Güvenliğin sağlanması ve silahlı gruplarla ilişkiler bakımından sekiz sorundan bahsedilebilir. Bunlardan ilki, silahlı grupların bazı yerel konseylerin yönetiminde oldukça etkili oldukları ve bu durum yerel konseylerin sivil karakterini zedelediği

söylenebilir. İkincisi, silahlı muhaliflerin parçalı ve gevşek yapısı ve diğer stratejik nedenlerden dolayı silahlı gruplar arasında sıklıkla taraf değiştirme ve yeni koalisyonların kurulması doğal olarak yerel konseyleri de etkiledi. Örneğin, bir bölgedeki yerel konseyi destekleyen silahlı bir grup daha radikal bir silahlı koalisyona katıldığında yerel konsey bu silahlı grubun desteğinden mahrum kalabiliyor hatta baskı görmeye başlayabiliyor. Üçüncü olarak, bu tarz taraf değişiklikleri bireysel seviyede savaşçılar arasında da olmaktadır. Yerel konseyleri destekleyen en büyük silahlı koalisyon olan Özgür Suriye Ordusu'na bağlı silahlı gruplar, düzensiz ve kısmi maaş ödemeleri ve radikal İslami silahlı grupların maddi ve manevi olarak çekiciliğinden dolayı savaşçılarını bu gruplara kaptırdılar. Diğer bir zorluk ise sahadaki ani toprak kayıpları sonucunda yaşanıyordu. Bir bölgenin kontrolünün kaptırılması sonucunda yerel konseylerin üyeleri tutuklamalar, ülke içinde veya başka bir yere göç etme zorunda kalma durumunda kalabiliyorlardı. Beşincisi, Özellikle iç kesimlerdeki yerel konseylerin bulunduğu yerlerde Suriye devleti tarafından gerçekleştirilen hava saldırıları ve kuşatma stratejileri bu bölgelerdeki yerel konseylerin sayısı, fonksiyon alanları ve gelişme seviyesi üzerinde olumsuz etkiler yarattı. Altıncısı, artan suç faaliyetlerine karşılık polis gücü oluşturma ve mahkemeler kurma gibi kurumsal çözümler bulma çabaları istenilen sonucu vermedi. Bir diğer problem, silahlı grupların birçok faaliyeti yerel konseyleri desteklemekten ziyade onlarla rekabet eden ve onların yaptığı işleri olumsuz yönde etkilediği söylenebilir. Bunun en açık örneği, bazı bölgelerde kurulmuş mahkemelerin işlerine karışmaları veya daha ılımlı ve göreceli olarak laik sayılabilecek mahkemeler yerine şeriat mahkemelerini desteklemeleri hatta onların kurulmalarına öncülük etmeleri gösterilebilir. Son olarak, göreceli olarak daha ılımlı olan silahlı grupların üyeleri dahil, mahkeme kararlarının militer grupların savaşçılarına uygulanması oldukça zordu. Nitekim, mahkeme kararından memnun kalmayan savaşçılar kolaylıkla başka bir bölgedeki silahlı gruba katılabiliyorlardı.

Fon ve finansman, güvenlik ve silahlı gruplarla ilişkiler gibi konular şüphesiz yerel konseylerin meşruluğunu da etkiliyordu. Bununla beraber, meşruluk durumu temel olarak Suriye Muhalif Koalisyonu, Suriye Geçici hükümeti ve bölgesel konseyler

gibi çatı kuruluşlarının uluslararası toplum ve alandaki yerel konseyler nazarında meşruluğu ve yerel konseylerin yerel halk ve silahlı gruplar nazarında meşruluğu olmak üzere iki seviyede incelenebilir. Her iki seviyede ciddi problemlerle karşılaşıldığı söylenebilir.

İlk olarak; Suriye Ulusal Koalisyonu, Suriye Muhalif Koalisyonu, Suriye Geçici hükümeti, birçok ülke ve uluslararası kurum tarafından Suriye halkının meşru temsilcisi olarak görüldü. Buna rağmen, bu çatı kuruluşların ve bölgesel konseylerin meşruluğu çeşitli etkenlerden dolayı zarar gördü. Bu etkenler kısaca şöyle özetlenebilir: alandaki aktif faaliyetlerine rağmen yerel konseylerin gerek Suriye Ulusal Koalisyonu gerekse de sonra kurulan Suriye Muhalif Koalisyonu içinde yetersiz temsil edilmesi; parçalı yönetim yapısı ve genellikle faaliyetlerini ülke dışında sürdüren çatı kuruluşların ülke içindeki yerel konseylerle olan zayıf iletişimi; bölgesel konseyler için düzenlenen seçimlerin komşu ve yakın ülkelerde gerçekleştirilmesi; yurtdışından gelen fon ve finansmana bağlı olduklarından dolayı Suriye siyasi muhalefetinin çatı kuruluşlarının yabancı bağışçılara karşı sorumlu olduğuna ilişkin algı; ve son olarak, Suriye içindeki ve dışındaki yönetim yapılarının yetersiz işbirliği ve koordinasyonu ve çatı kuruluşlarının alandaki sınırlı varlığı ve bu nedenden dolayı özellikle Suriye içindeki kuşatılmış yerel konseyler tarafından yeterince tanınmaması.

Diğer taraftan, yerel halkın bakış açısından yerel konseylerin de meşruluğunu tehdit eden birçok faktörün olduğu görülür. Bunlar, bazı bölgelerde seçim düzenleyememek ve bunun yerine farklı alternatif yollara başvurulması gibi seçim düzenlemekle ilgili problemler; güvenlik kaygıları ve istikrarsız koşullardan dolayı seçimlere katılımın düşük seviyede kalması; seçim tecrübesi olmaması ve oy sayımı, yasal düzenlemeler, aday listeleri ve oy merkezlerinin hazırlanması gibi konulardaki teknik yetersizlikler; kadın, genç ve azınlık gruplarına mensup kişilerin yerel konseylerin yönetim kollarına az sayıda dahil edilmesi; bazı radikal silahlı gruplar, dini liderler ve topluluk liderlerinin yerel konseylerin meşruluğunu ve prestijini

sarsan bozucu ve rahatsız edici faaliyetleri; ve son olarak aynı bölgede birbiriyle rekabet eden ve bu nedenle bazen karşı karşıya gelen farklı yönetim mekanizmaları.

Şunu belirtmek gerekir ki aslında fon ve finansman, güvenlik ve silahlı gruplarla olan ilişkiler, ve meşruluk bakımından karşılaşılan zorluklar ve eksiklikler aynı zamanda yerel konseylerin etkinlik ve verimliliğini düşürmüştür. Bunlar dışında yerel konseylerin etkililiğini sekteye uğratan diğer problemler şöyle özetlenebilir: çatı kuruluşların yerel konseylere liderlik yapamamaları; sık yapılan seçimlerle yerel konseylerin yönetimlerinin yeniden yapılandırılması ve bu durumun istikrarsızlığa yol açması, dış aktörlerden geçici yardımlar alabilmek için geçici kişisel bağlantılara güvenilmesi; iç savaşın uzamasından dolayı başlangıçtaki coşku, enerji ve motivasyonun kaybedilmesi; devrimci aktivistler ve önde gelen ailelerin üyeleri ve topluluk liderleri arasındaki tansiyonun neden olduğu iç tartışmalar; tarafsızlık ve hesap verilebilirlik gibi prensiplere çoğu yerel konseyin yönetim yapısında önem verilmemesi; yerel konseylerin idari yapılarında görev alacak kalifiye memur ve çalışanların eksikliği; yerel konseylerde çalışanların eğitimi ve gelişimi için verilen desteğin yetersiz olması; ve son olarak, normal bir bürokratik sistemin işlemesi için gerekli olan temel ekipman, donanım ve lojistik desteğin yetersiz olması.

Başlangıçta halk tabanlı olarak örgütlenen yerel konseylerin iç savaş süreci içinde Suriye'deki siyasi muhalefetin devlet kurumlarına alternatif olarak sunduğu bir yönetim ağı haline gelmesi etkileyici bir serüven. Kuşkusuz, çeşitli nedenlerden dolayı ülkesini veya yaşadığı yeri terk edemeyen insanlar için yerel konseylerin bir iç savaş ortamında hayatı yaşanabilir kılmak için ortaya koyduğu çabalar takdir edilebilir. Bu tez yazılırken, yerel konseyler birkaç yıl önceki kadar güçlü ve fazla sayıda olmasalar da birçok bölgede kritik hizmetleri sağlamaya devam ediyorlar. Suriye'de silahlı muhaliflerin kontrol ettikleri bölgelerde devlet kurumlarına alternatif ve hatta Esad'ın devrilmesiyle birlikte Suriye'de resmi yerel yönetim modeli olarak tasarlanan yerel konseyler, hizmet ve yönetim alanlarındaki tüm değerli katkılarına rağmen bulundukları bölgelerin birçoğunda kalıcı olabilecek güvenli ve yaşanabilir ortamlar yaratmayı başaramadılar. Suriye içinde ve dışında

yer alan parçalı yönetim yapılarından dolayı yatay ve dikey olarak bütünlük içinde işleyen bir yönetim mekanizması kurulamadı. Mali ve güvenlik bakımından merkezi bir hiyerarşi sağlanamadı. Sonuç olarak, yerel konseyler bu tezde bahsedilen birçok alanda karşılaştıkları sorunlar ve eksikliklerden dolayı bulundukları bölgelerde devlet-benzeri yapılar olarak ön plana çıkamadılar.

APPENDIX B

TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü ☑

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü ☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü ☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü ☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Aykut
Adı : Özcan
Bölümü : Uluslararası İlişkiler

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Filling the International and Local Governance Gap in a Presumed 'Failed State': Local Councils in the Opposition-Held Areas of Syria

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans ☑ Doktora ☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir. ☐
3. Tezimden bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz. ☐

Yazarın İmzası ..... Tarih .....