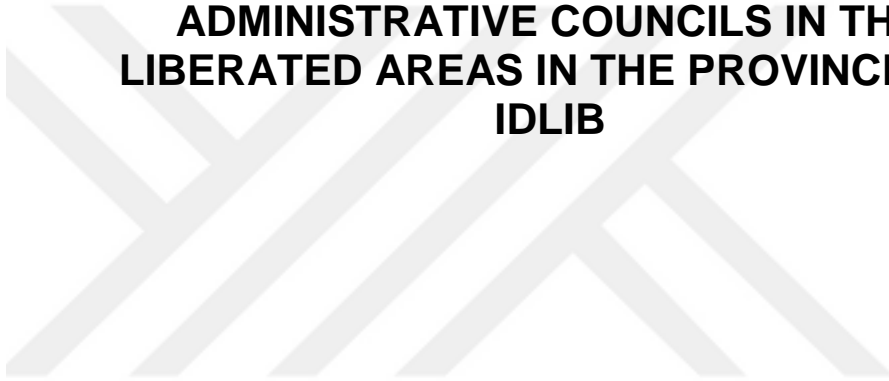REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

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MASTER OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS THESIS

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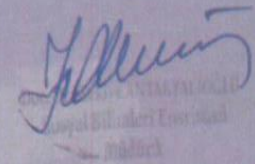
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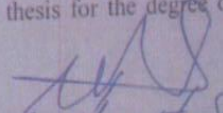
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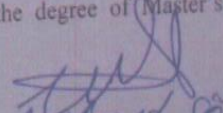
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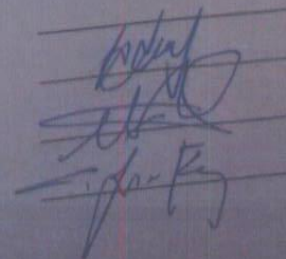(Title, Name and SURNAME)
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bildirir, aksi bir durumda aleyhime doğabilecek tüm hak kayıplarını kabullendiğimi beyan ederim.

ARNOLD VENIEGAS LAROYA

ŞUBAT 2018

DEDICATION

This humble work is dedicated to my ever loving and supporting wife, Canan, daughters, Elfida and Odelya who have always been my inspiration and strength while treading this academic journey.

To every Syrian – men and women, children and young, in and out of the country – let us not rest even for a moment to keep hoping and praying, in the name of Allah, that despite of passing through difficult and traumatic stages, the peace and development in Syria is "not only possible but inevitable"

ABSTRACT

EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS IN THE LIBERATED AREAS IN THE PROVINCE OF IDLIB

LAROYA, Arnold Veniegas
M.A. Thesis, Department of International Relations
Supervisor: Asst. Prof. Dr. Mesut SOHRET
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The conflict in Syria continues for over six years now. On the 15th of March 2011, the regime met opponents' protests hardly in Deraa and this event has started the Syrian Civil War. Hundred of thousands Syrian died, millions have been injured, and millions forced to flee their homelands, millions of Syrian internally displaced. From the first days of Syrian Civil War, the idea of Local Administrative Councils emerged with high hopes as a way to bound up wounds, a new governance model in the liberated areas of Syria from regime forces.

This new local governance model is expected to mobilize people at local level as democratic, civil and independent institutions which are responsible for management of daily public services in the absence of central government. However after six years of conflict, Local Administrative Councils failed to meet these expectations and realize the goals. Their existence as a local government model has been so far challenged in the brutal history of Syrian Civil War. Challenges before the Local Administrative Councils are still quite high in terms of achieving an independent, legitimate, accountable, democratic and effective governance model.

The goal of this research is to shed light to the reasons behind the failures of the Local Administrative Councils in the liberated areas – by the Free Syrian Army (FSA) -in the province of Idlib (northern part of Syria) on the basis of being a well-functioning, effective local governance model. In doing so, research applied deductive theory, content analysis and structural functional theory as method to analyze effectiveness of Local Administrative Councils in terms of satisfying local needs. A structural - functional point view of Local Councils therefore discussed to understand functionality of Local Councils as structures within the liberated areas of Syria.

Key Words: Local Administrative Council, Conflict in Syria, a New Governance Model inIdlib, Democratic Model.

ÖZET

İDLİB BÖLGESİNİN ÖZGÜR BIRAKILMIŞ ALANLARINDA KURULAN YEREL YÖNETİM KONSEYLERİNİN ETKİN İŞLEYİŞİ

LAROYA, Arnold Veniegas
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Şubat 2018, 85 sayfa

Suriye'deki iç savaş altı yıldan uzun bir süredir devam etmektedir. Esad Rejimi, 15 Mart 2011'de Dera'da muhaliflerin protestolarını acı bir şekilde karşıladı ve bu olay Suriye iç savaşının başlamasına neden oldu. Yüzbinlerce Suriyeli öldü, milyonlarcası yaralandı, milyonlarca Suriyeli yurdundan kaçmaya zorlandı ve milyonlarcası ülkelerindeki farklı bölgelere gitmek zorunda kaldı. Suriye içsavaşının ilk günlerinden itibaren yerel yönetim konseyleri fikri, Suriye'nin özgür bırakılmış bölgelerinde, mevcut rejim yönetiminden farklı, yeni bir yönetişim modeli olarak yaraları sarma umuduyla ortaya çıktı.

Bu yeni yerel yönetişim modeli, merkezi hükümetin yokluğunda günlük kamu hizmetlerinin yönetiminden sorumlu olan demokratik, sivil ve bağımsız kurumlar olarak yerel düzeyde insanları harekete geçirmeyi hedeflemekteydi.

Ancak altı yıllık çatışmadan sonra, Yerel Yönetim Konseyleri bu beklentileri karşılamayı ve hedefleri gerçekleştirmeyi başaramadı. Suriye iç savaşı tarihinde, yerel bir hükümet modeli olarak varolmaları, birçok zorluklarla karşılaşmalarına neden olmuştur. Yerel Yönetim Konseyleri'nin bağımsız, meşru, hesap verebilir, demokratik ve etkin bir yönetişim modeli olarak var olması konusundaki zorluklar hala devam etmektedir.

Bu araştırmanın amacı, Özgür Suriye Ordusu (FSA) tarafından özgürlüğe kavuşan İdlib'de (Suriye'nin kuzey kesimi) etkili bir yerel yönetişim modeli olarak kurulan Yerel Yönetim Konseyleri'nin başarısızlıklarının arkasındaki nedenlere ışık tutmaktır. Bunu yaparken, Yerel Yönetim Konseyleri'nin yerel ihtiyaçları karşılamadaki etkinliğini analiz etmek için araştırma, tümdengelimli analiz, içerik analizi ve yapısal işlevsel analiz yöntemleri uygulanmıştır. Böylece, Suriye'nin özgürleşmiş bölgelerinde kurulan Yerel Konseylerin yapısal işlevselliğine bir bakışaçısı getirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerel Yönetim Konseyi, Suriye'de Çatışma, Idlib'de Yeni Bir Yönetişim Modeli, Demokratik Model.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

DECLARATION

No portion of the work referred to in the study has been submitted in support for another qualification or degree of this or any other institution of learning or university.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. THE PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The famous Arab uprising that started in December 2010 and has intensified its geopolitical swing by reaching its tentacles up to Syria in 2011, has left ungoverned spaces in most areas of the country. In the case of northern Syria by mid-2012, it started to feel the need for a governance to fill their basic needs such as clean water, electricity, garbage disposal and other services that the current government used to provide before the conflict broke out.

Local Councils (LCs) or Local Administrative Councils (LACs), which emerged as the main players of the local civilian governance in the liberated areas, are the cornerstones for the efforts of civil society to get organized and mobilized after the Syrian uprising. Importance of local governance initiatives cannot be underestimated especially as a non-military means for the re-organization of local communities. From delivering basic services to creating employment opportunities, from health care to education, normalization of life in the conflict area and addressing these vital administrative functions, no doubt, is the key for re-building peace in the area by creating strong civil solidarity within the liberated areas of Syria. However, regarding Syria, the sole common ground which is not changed over the years after the outbreak of internal conflict is the existence of humanitarian tragedy in the region. From the beginning, Local Councils emerged as the hope for governance at local level in a territory as one of the means for civilizing the Syrian conflict in the failed state (lack of government) areas for filling the gap left by the state by touching daily-life of the population.

This study employs a perspectivein an attempt to understand the rationale behind existence of Local Councils in Syria – Idlib in particular. Moreover, the goal of this studyis to provide analysis to the effectiveness of the Local Councils in the development of a strong local governance and civil society in liberated areas (by the moderate group) of Syria. This study will look closely the efficiency and quality in terms of delivering services to the people that were affected by the conflict for the period 2011 to 2014. Details of thistime frame is that, Idlib province, unlike Aleppo and Raqqa at the same perod of time, still did not have the extremist groups that opposedthe creation of civil societies to act as the local government in the conflict-affected areas.

The influence of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levent or commonly known as the ISIL particularly in the countryside of Idlib, was still weak to pursue their claims. According to (Khalaf et al, 2011-2014: 16-17), there is couple of reasons affecting the situation. First, the local communities had a very strong resistance against ISILs' presence in the community. The second factor was when the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and other Islamic opposition militias hold their stand to oppose ISIL, the extremist group rather turned their focus in controlling and pitching their stronghold in areas like Raqqa, Aleppo (mostly in eastrn countryside) and Deir az-Zor.

Furthermore, because of its close proximity to the border of Turkey, Idlibhas become an indespensible business routes by the international organizations based from various locations in Turkey. During the early time of the liberation, Idlib, with the interference of Turkey, became a buffer zone that is free from the air attacks by the current regime. As a result, localgovenance in the form of local administrative councils or just local councils were prosferring after its liberation in 2012 (Martin, 2014: 5-6).

One other objective of the study is to seek to assess the governance functions of the Local Councils. In this respect, study will give a particular attention to the importance of civil society and the challenges before the establishment of well-functioning local governance. In a comparative study, effectiveness of Local Councils, in terms of satisfying main functions of governance will be elaborated by considering the very nature of the Syrian conflict.

1.2. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The main research question of this study is whether Local Councils in Idlib are effective and efficient enough for local governance by fulfilling the governance functions and answering needs of local communities in those liberated areas.

This study mainly elaborates on the functioning of the Local Councils. Thus, effectiveness of Local Councils will be explored by considering external and internal challenges and limitations by analyzing the main question from the historical context.

Within this context following research questions will be analyzed;

a) How the Local Councils take necessary actions to satisfy daily needs of Local Communities?

b) How to measure their effectiveness?

c) What are the main challenges before their well-functioning?

d) How these Local Councils affected the International Relations?

e) How do the external powers contribute to the inefficiency that leads to the destruction of the Local Councils?

f) What are the factors involved for the LC's reconstructions?

Target population of the study is local administrative councils as a governing body in the liberatedareas in the northern part of Syria particularly in the province of Idlib as well local and international organizations operating in the area. In order to analyze above questions, researcher invokes to the descriptive research method.

1.3. LIMITATIONS

Although this research was carefully prepared and reached its aim, there were some unavoidable factors limiting the scope of this research. First of all, due to the fact that the situation remains extremely volatile and dangerous, travelling to Syria was not advised. Therefore, no physical visit was made to Syria, particularly in Idlib, which is the subject of this study. The arguments presented in this research would have been stronger if, I, myself, were present to observe the actual implementation of the projects by the local councils in question and gain more understanding of underlying reasons that could provide insights or develop ideas into

the research and since a quantitative research cannot be conducted into this study, rather qualitative research methods are chosento review existing literature on the subject. Researcher benefited from Structural Functional approach to assess effective functionality of Local Councils.

Furthermore, due to security reasons and in line with official communications of Directorate of Migration Management, without formal prior authorization from Ministry of Interior, it is currently not possible to conduct research in the field including collecting personal data from Syrian foreigners in Turkey. Structured survey and interviews can be more objective and thus strengthen the research reliability and validity of the arguments presented. Third, content analysis is easilyunderstood and inexpensive kind of research method. It is very simple, and it didn't require access face-to-face with people. However, it would have been a more powerful tool when combined with other research methods such as interviews, surveys, and observations. Because research is built on more qualitative methodology, it describes what is there, but may not reveal the underlying motives for the observed pattern ("what" but not "why").

1.4. STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY

The study consists of seven chapters and each chapter has subtitles to give some information about specific topic in detail.

The study provides a brief history of the Arab Spring with the chronological emergence of the revolution in the Middle East until the spark finally reaches Syria which gave birth to the creation of the Local Administrative Councils (LAC's) or LC's (Local Councils) in many parts of Syria affected by the conflict.A special focus of the study will be given to the LAC: the emergence of the LAC's and if the LAC's are efficiently functioning and meeting the people's expectations. Its role plays in the international arena, the factors affecting the efficiency of the councils by the external players and efforts for reconstruction is also explored.

The summary and the conclusion of this study together with a discussion of a possible future work are all included in the last chapter of this work. It contains the reflections on the evidences presented in the context and background that necessitates in pursuing the research problem in relation to the issues and gaps found in the various sources.

As a further work, there is no doubt that, it is much reliable to assess the effectiveness of the Local Administrative Councils through surveys using questionnaire (see Appendix 1) aiming to find the expectations for the existence of Local Administrative Councils that can be prepared and sent into the field. Through this kind questionnaire, a valid definition of "effectiveness" can be obtained within the real-time conditions inside Syria.

CHAPTER TWO

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: SYRIAN UPRISING

2.1. BEGINNING OF ARAB UPRISING

"*A single spark can start a prairie fire*", a famous Chinese saying that seems appropriate to describe the series of revolution that was first sparked in December 2010 in Tunisia that swept over the Arab region unrestrained. As if something has emerged of a cocoon with its desire goal to give voice to an oppressed and long-silenced Arab political society. (Farazmand, 2011: 9-11) affirms that never before seen such some events opening a new perspectivein the development of the sequence of uprising as a new political and human character seeking to be freed from the shackles of tyranny and despot is rising in the Arab world.

(Mohamedou, 2012: 3) attested that the on-going and open-ended nature of the transformation offers clear and important two key dimensions. First, this is arguably one of the most important phases in the contemporary period of the region, both as regards internal developments and regional ones. The process is complex and protracted, and the finaloutcome of these phenomena is still uncertain — their victories and crisis, their hopes and their disappointments, but there is only one thing clear - no going back!Patterns of state-society interaction have been irremediably altered. There is, no need for semantic queries which have been at times indulged about 'the Arab Spring' — whether these are revolts, uprisings, revolutions, or intifadas. What we see infront of us is a series of operations universal in its impact with manifold local societal dimensions. As consequential transformations, the consequence of the Arab uprisingis still playing out and their shadow will be invariably long and complex.

Secondly, their character and appearance are not the same although interrelated. In the beginning, Bahrainis, Egyptians, Libyans, Syrians, Tunisians and Yemenis and many more have expressed similar cry about social injustices, oppressions and suppressions, inequality, the longing for a just and fair governance and the equal opportunity to represent for a democratic transition that is in play affects each one of them. There is interdependence to the series of events that one must see in depth, in time that the Arab uprising is unfolding into its full length, then its unique character will manifest in itself. For now, what we can observe is its complexity in nature that is swaying in many directions, which is a normal process for any societies going through a big change: more upheavals, more political or theological orientations, the call for globalization and human empowerment (Mohamedou, 2012: 3).

The impact of this sudden change of the political culture on the Arab region has been profound. One can observe its ultimate result might not become certain for at least many years to come. The initial protests in early 2010 that spillover across the Arab region had caused a seemingly unending process of social and political change, as distinguished initially by political disturbance, economic crisis, and even more confrontations and divisions among its stakeholders (Manfreda, 2014: 1). As a result, (Cali, 2015: 1) added that civil wars are not only a human tragedy for the countries that experience them, but they can also have an impact on neighboring countries.

Andre Colling of the News24 on his report indicates that the crisis in Syria is affecting the countires on its border:Israel, Iraq, Jodan, Lebanon and Turkeyand estimated that the situation is becoming worse in a longer term:

Israel- is on watch and continuously following the on-going conflict from the start with high importance. The Jewish state's growing concern is about the regime's transfer of heavy weapons and chemical weapons in and out of Syria, by Israel's enemy, Hezbollah. Israel's concern can be seen by the deployment of more military support in the border to Lebanon and in fact has already suppressed by several aerial bombardments against potential delivery of arms and weapons shipments into Syria, adding to a more unfriendly gesture from Assad's regime and warned Israel to retaliate if Israel continues to do the same actions. Israel, on the other hand seems not be perturbed with Syria's warning and vowed to act forcefully

if the regime will transfer weapons and arms to Hezbollah, which Israel had already waged war with Hezbollah in 2006. As the Assad regime continues to deal with its domestic crisis with various opposition groups and extremists, it is unlikely to take on any action on Israel, although Assad has given the go-signal to its military to carry out attacks to Israelis in the Golan Heights.

As of now, the effect of the Syrian conflict on Israel in general appears to be contained. With its known strong military ability and potentialities, it is likely to fight back for any attacks to defend its territory and will continue to show aggressive actions against any hostile gestures either in Syria or by the Hezbollah in Lebanon. More strikes can also be anticipated to carry on.

As Hezbollah is currently dealing various rebel groups in Syria in support for the Assad's regime, the possibility to provoke a conflict against Israel is unlikely to happen, unless Israel will carry out any territorial activities.

One important aspect that needs to be followed is the scenario after the Syrian conflict and Assad's regime will still hold onto power, is the high possibility that another confrontation is going to happen between Israel and Hezbollah, especially what makes up the regime will definitely an essential factor. Whether Assad will continue to hold on to power, the hostile policy of both sides can continue although refrain from initiating a devastating war considering the high cost of doing so. On the other hand, if Assad falls and the opposition makes the government, it is not Israel's interest to support and deal with a government with strong Islamist composition (Colling, 2013: 1-2).

Iraq – for countries like Syria and Iraq that has a long history of conflict back in 2003 when both political and security increase the violence day by day resulting to thousands of casualties in both sides can be difficult to quantify. Adding to the conflict, is the continuing hostile relationship between the believers of the Shiite and Sunni Muslim groups. But what can easily be observed as the effects of the Syrian war with Iraq are the attacks and violence between Assad's regime and the rebel groups near the borders wth the direct consequence on closing due to the severe fighting. In some instances, undentified cross border attacks by armed men also occurred by the ambush of Iraqi security personnel convoy carrying some wounded Syrian regime forces while crossing al-Waleed border on their wayback to Syria. It was reported that some 40 Syrian forces died in this incident.

Unlike in Lebanon that the cross border is located close to the major urban areas, the shared border to Iraq is a low dense population community therefore the spread of violaton is not that significant and unanticipated.

The biggest impact that maybe recorded in the Syrian history of war is the establishment of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levent (ISIL) with an announcement made by the self-proclaim caliphate, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi with an intention of joning his force with the other group called the Al-Nusra Front. Although some of the Al-Nusra Front group denied the announcement resulted to a division of the Syrian rebel group; those that support and pledge allegiance to the move and those that denied the connection to the Iraqi jihadist group.

In order to pursue ISIL cause in Syria, hundreds of Jihadists were sent to Syria, but for the Al-Nusra Front group, it made apparent that their priorities and intentions are totally different from that of the ISIL. The link between the two groups remains unclear but perhaps can only be manifested once the war is finished and who can be the victorious one to be in power over Syria.

One final impact on the Syrian conflict to Iraq is the reinforcement of the goal by the Kurds for the establishment of a single Kurd state, if and when a rebel group wins the battle in Syria. With the successful and well-established presence of the Kurds in the north-eastern part of Syria similar to the one in the north of Iraq, the Kurdistan Regional Government the possibility of joining together to form one government is big that will create tension with Turkey and Iran which are both struggling to combat Kurd separatist movement in the north-west and south-east respectively. Perhaps it is too early to predict Turkey and Iran's approach for this respect but knowing the background of these two countries towards the Kurds, their policy seems to be the same – hostile and confrontational.

Jordan – similar to Lebanon, about half a million displaced Syrian refugees has entered Jordan since 2011 at which time the government of Jordan responded by establishing various refugee camps. As of now, no other serious effect reported of the Syrian war towards Jordan with the exception of some occassional and infrequent mortar and rocket attacks to the border. Problems about the poor living conditions that the people are experiencing is commonly reported resulting to frequent unrest in the area, which the Jordanian government responded to increase and tighten security measures.

Due to its ability to deal with security issues, coupled with its policy not to intervene to the Syrian crisis, the Jordanian government remained neutral and remained contained itself. The government managed to scrutinize those Jordanian entering into Syria thus limiting or avoiding those who are potential to join the extremists or in some instances smugglers. Since 2011, the well-equipped Jordanian police and military have expanded their numbers in the northern part of the country and efficiently handling the further influx of refugees and stops spill-over of conflicts among the.

The future and longer impact of the Syrian crisis to Jordan is still uncertain. With the presence of US military base in the area to support its military muscle, it becomes a concern that this action could open an opportunity for any future potential retaliation from the anti-American groups and critics living both inside and outside the country. Furthermore, the existing Salafist community in Jordan may start its already on-going sentiments that will end up to stitrring rebellion in the country (Colling, 2013: 1-2).

Lebanon – one can observe that the immediate effect of the crisis in Lebanon is the increasing security issues.There has been an increasing violatons with the locals as a result of the Syrian refugee influx in the country since 2011, which according to the report, is comprising 10 percent of the total population causing a heavy economic struggle in the area. Violence and unrest have also experienced with the rival from various rebel groups in the north and east of the country. Tripoli, a city lies in the north of Lebanon for instance has experienced number of intense fighting between rebel groups supporting various opposition groups in Syria.

It was also reported some instances of clan disputes and quarrels supporting various opposition groups that immediately spread in the regional borders in the northern districts. With the problem of increasing polarization in the Lebanon's political system and its inability to build a strong security forces as well its nearness to the conflict areas are all factors keeping the country vulnerable to Syria's crisis maybe in a long run (Colling, 2013: 1-2).

Turkey – due to its close proximity to the Syrian border, Turkey is the first one to experience the impact of the Syrian crisis. The continous flow of people seeking asylum near the border as a result of the intense fighting in Idlib and Aleppo, also creates occasional unrest between the locals and Syrians. Since the outbreak of the conflict in 2011, Turkey gives permission to the opposition to conduct its

business in Turkey that leads further to a more hostile relationship between the two governments. This was apparent with the spread of unrests in few occasions, for instance, the shot down of a Turkish military plane in June 2012 by the Syrian military forces over the Mediterranean, then a bomb that land in the Turkish soil leaving five Turkish dead. In response, Turkish military carried out military attack to the Syrian force. Several bomb attacks inside Turkey particulary in Reyhanli, and close to the crossing (Bab al-Hawa) were carried out in May 2013, where number of deaths and casualties both Turkish nationals and Syrians were reported, blaming the Syrian intelligence services and military-link individuals initiated the attack (Colling, 2013: 1-2).

According to Kenneth Pollack in his article entitled, *Understanding the Arab Awakening*, the Middle Eastern people have finally found themselves to stand up and speak up to the streets without fear of risking their lives about their miseries and frustrations to the government leaders demanding change.As a consequence of this action, Arabs in the region seem to believe that they can change their fate, that the series of activism has the capacity to transform the political dynamics in the Middle East (Pollack, 2011: 7).

What can the region expect next? Now that the first phase of the revolution is done by removing most of the leaders from power, a more difficult phase of differenciating revolution from transition will immediately takes place.

In general, transitions can be more difficult than the revolutions. The process takes longer and even more complex. It is the stage of trial and error and therefore it can fail. A revolutionis about releasing energies while transition is about reconstruction needing various skillsand resources (Mohamedou, 2012: 8-9). In some cases, revolutions do not always result to the aspired democracy nor an event that bring people to reality from the ideal world, like the one happened in Egypt (Bishara, 2011: 1).

However, one essential aspect of the revolutions that can be learned is its character in the formation of a democratic awakening of the people that will decide the future of other countries in the Arab region. The success and extent of democracy for countries in transition after the revolution will have a domino effect to other (Arab) counties as well as to whichdirection the existing (Arab) regimes go. Once again (Bishara, 2011: 1) asserted the impotance of revolutions in

revivingthepan-Arab sentiment and in the preservation of unity against tyranny and oppression.

Map 2.1 - Road Map of the Arab Uprising

2.2. ARAB SPRING

2.2.1. Cause and Effect of the Uprising

Number of factors were determined leading to the uprising. Most of those who went to the streets were educated youths expressing their dissatisfaction on how the leaders run the government in terms of unemployment rate and poor economy, while other strata of the society cry for human rights violations, corruptions, extreme poverty and the authoritarian style or absolute monarchy (Korotayev and Zinkina, 2011: 168). The African Development Bank (AfDB) made an interesting comment that the Arab Spring is link to the incapacity of the government leaders in Libya, Tunisia and Egypt to meet the demands of having good governance, policies of inclusive growth, job creation and political inclusion.

Again (Bishara, 2011: 1) affirms that the revolution is the result of the leader's complete impasse and inability to continue to rule with the old ways and traditional governance in as much as not able to embrace new methods to weild in their methods of ruling.

In an article written by Hamze Abbas Jamoul for Al Mamar News, he mentioned that fundamental for any society are politics and human rights. While most of the countries in the world has already reached a certain level of political rights and democracy, the Arab regions are still in the state of bad political system as a result from religious fundamentalism, lack of freedom of expression, absence of a democratic election as well as the free choice of political affiliations, imposition of emergency laws and too much corruption. However, one thing is clear, as attested by Jamoul in the same article he has written, Arab people will not turn their back again and accept the old political system of their countries. No one will take back of what they have started. Should one will attempt to do so, there is always a revolution for the protection of their rights and claims.

(Rozsa, 2013: 11) One cannot deny of the success that opens new model of change by bringing hundreds of people on the streets has been accomplished spearheaded by the young and youths through the use of all kinds of mass media – described as the new tool of political revolution. In the same manner, Elakawi argued that the slowlydisintegration of the old regimes and their incpacity to replace with a new socio-political system for their citizens, have paved the way to the Islamic fundamentalism, bringing a huge challenge for the state and Arab civil societies, which increases the polarization between the radical and moderate Islam.

Up until now, Bahrain, Egypt, Libya, Syria, Tunisia and Yemen have experienced full-swingof political turmoil, resulting to the removal of their tyrant leaders or to break the chain from a long year of suffering, that are outstanding from the rest of the region. Among the six countries to undergo uprisings, not even a single one can be told to have had a victorious revolution thatbrings to a real democratic social and political processes (Anderson, 2011: 7).

Chronology of the Arab countries affected by the Arab Spring:

2.2.2. Tunisia (December 2010 – January 2011): Jasmine Revolution The "spark" that started it all

The events that took place in Tunisia is also called the Jasmine Revolution by some Turkish writers.In December 2010, a series of spontenousand unanticipated protests and demonstrations broke out in various areas in Tunisia as the response from the people after the inhumane treatment of a policeman to a young street vendor

named Mohamed Bouazizi, who because of frustration, hopelessness and feeling of injustice, set himself on fire. The response from the government was gruesome as shown and reported in various social media. However, the protesters were not perturbed with the government cruelty by arresting activists, protesters and even shutting down internets to suppress the flow of what is actually happening in the country.

People did not show any sign of backing off instead, they press on and persevere to what they are fighting for until the spark of people's anger had finally reached the capital city, Tunis. It was at this time that the former President, Zine el-Abedin Ben Ali, took an action by reshuffling his cabinet members and promised the people to create thousands of jobs. The people did not believe in him anymore and just wanted him and his regime to collapse and give up his power. Finally, on 14 January 2014, Ben Ali and his family took an asylum to Saudi Arabia which marked as the victory for the people to topple an oppressive and authoritarian Arab leader by a people's power rather than a military coup.

2.2.3. Egypt (January 25–February 11, 2014): The January 25 Revolution

It is also called the Lotus Revolution. The spirit of the revolution that started and ended successfully in Tunisia has reached to the consciousness of the Egyptians when the same act of protests was conducted on January 25, 2014 (Police Day) with one aim to end the 30-year old corrupt regime of the former President Hosni Mubarak.With the use of social media, the news regarding the protest grew like wildfire that turned into a national revolutionary movement. In a very short span of 18 days, the repressive leader Mubarak along with his National Democratic Pary (NDP) has been toppled down from his decades of power.

The events that took place in Egypt happened too fast. At first, huge protests and demonstratons in the major cities like Alexandria, Cairo and the taking over of the Tahir (Liberation) Square in Cairo were responded with volence and brutality by the police and supporters of the NDP. By complying with the governemnt's request, mobile servce providers and internet were suspended. But Egyptians have torn apart the veil of fear and responded to whatever means they could to the regimes wrath of anger. It was a victory from the people when the Egyptian army decided not to side with Mubarak and not to take action against the

people. As a result, Mubarak made some compromise in order to pacify the people's demands by reshuffling his cabinets and appointing his intelligence Omar Suleiman to be the vice president, promising he and his son, Gamal not to seek re-election after finishing his term. However, it was on February 11, 2014, when a massive demonstraton took place and Mubarak finally announced his resignation rom power. This day was called since then the "Friday of Depature".

Following the departure of Mubarak from power, Tantawi the head of the Supreme Council of Armed Forces (SCAF) took over control of the country at which time the constitution suspended, and legislature was dissolved until the new government is elected.

2.2.4. Libya (February 2011)

Just a few days have passed after the dramatic fall of Hosni Mubarak in Egypt had happened and the protest in Libya took place, February 15. A crowd rushed in infront of the police headquarters in Benghazi after the authority arrested the attorney for human rights who is representing relatives of a thousand prisoners who were believed to be slaughtered by the security forces in one of the jails in 1996 (Abu Salim Jail) in Tripoli.

A series of peaceful protests were organized in different parts of Libya but the response of Gadafi's police and military men was brutal and unproportioned. The France government reacted to the action of the regime and expressed their support to the protesters instead.

Consequently, the Libyan Opposition held a National Conference and declared that February 17 is a "Day of Rage". The regime's security and military forces made attacks and launched live ammunitions and firearms to the demonstrators. Overwhelmed by the courage and boldnesss of the protesters, the regime forces withdrew and many of them joined the rank of the protesters. Subsequently, the anti-Gaddafi forces formed a provisional government located in Benghazi – the National Transitional Council aims to topple down the Gaddafi regime.

2.2.5. Yemen (January 2011)

Inspired by the successful revolution resulted to the overthrow of the authoritarian leaders, anger of frustrated and hopeless people once again sparked when thousands of Yemenis went to the street in capital Sanaa, crying for the resignation of Ali Abdullah Saleh, the former president who reigned for 30 long years in power.

On January 27, 2014, over 16,000 demonstrators occupied the capital city asking for Saleh to step down. Saleh made concession to the protesters announcing that he will not seek for another re-election as well as not to transfer power to his son.The people seem to learn from their past that their displeasure to the regime forced them to stage more protests in the main cities of Sana'a and Aden and called it a "Day of Rage.

The response of Saleh's forces was harsh by delivering extreme violence causing division even within his own party – General People's Congress (GPC), and interestingly within his own clan, Sanhani. As a result, some key politicians resigned from his party and established a moderate political group known as the Justice and Development bloc. High ranking military personnel took side and support the people as well as the main opponent to Saleh's son for the presidency. The Gulf Cooperation Council in concert with the Western countries brought forth discussions and solutions that includes transitional phase and an amnesty or Saleh and his family.

2.2.6. Bahrain (February - March 2011) – Also Called the Pearl Revolution or the February 14 Revolution

Between February and March 2011, the famous Pearl Roundabout in the capital city Manama in the kingdom of Bahrain was occupied by demonstrators calling for the absolute monarchial government reigned by King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa since 1999, demanding for political and economic reforms, equal opportunities for a Shia dominated country but most of all to end of the ruling monarchy.

The seemingly peaceful protest was dealt with oppression by the regime leaving number of casualties and deaths from the protesters and some bystanders. Some key opposition leaders were sent to jail while number of Shia mosques and structures have been razed and demolished.

On March 14, 2014, a "State of National Security" was declared by the Gulf Cooperation Council who sided with the regime and started clampdown against the demonstrators, the Pearl Roundabout was assaulted, cleared protesters camps and the monument at its center demolished.

2.2.7. Syrian revolution - (January 2011 to Present)

The Syrian uprising, which started by a graffiti made by a group of young children resulted to a peaceful protest on January 26, 2011 in Deraa which developed to of what is to present the on going internal political crisis. The series of the sparks of the Arab uprising that started in Tunisia in 2010 had finally reach Syria. Similar to the previous revolutions, protesters in Syria seeks for economic and political reforms, and demands for the removal of President Bashar al-Assad to power giving way to broaden political freedom that includes the right to form political parties that will lead to a democratic electon, and most importantly the freedom of expression and of the press.

Number of negotiations with trivial concessions was made by the Assad regime to the oppositions. On April 21, 2014, the regime started the series of clampdown of demonstrations by making attacks with tanks, firing of arms and use of snipers and other unproportionate means in order to dismiss people off the streets.

Not contented, Assad forces tried to paralyze the main cities by shutting down electricity and water, seizing flour use for bread and food supplies and punishing the people by suspending all kinds of municipal services. The conflict became more complicated by Syria's multiple ethnicity groups where Assad and most of the country's elite families belong to the Alawite denomination while minority in a Sunii dominated country.

An estimated 2,900 deaths and over 10,000 arrests were reported by the Human Rights groups in October 2011. Syrian oppositions immediately formed the Syrian National Council which consists of representatives from various groups from political, religious, civil society, Kurdish factions, and other independent and ethnic figures.

As one observes, the nature and scope of the revolution that hit the Arab region is not uniform. Each one is different and unique. However, some dramatic similarities between them are discernable; countries and states coming out from the

phase of chaos and political turmoil are facing a difficult question of how the country is going to be reconstructed. Will they be re-established or re-enforced old system of governance or follow a pattern from the existing institutions or create something new that meets the need of the condition (Blunt and Turner 2005: 75). For countries with a simultaneous on-going conflict and regimes are seriously weakened or collapsed, it is difficult or almost impossible to carry out stabilization, governance restoration and reconstruction efforts. Although restoring governance is a complex task, it is essential to do something that is necessary and realistic. Therefore, aiming for a good enough governance at the time of conflict is an ambitious task (Brinkerhoff and Johnson 2008: 1).

Understanding how supposedly ungoverned spaces can be governed is important. One should not assume that an absence of a functioning government means absence of public goods or systems designed to resolve collective needs and issues (Seyle, 2015: 1). To be sure, many of these institutions are insufficient, but others may function fairly well and fill up to degree, the vacuum left by a collapsing regime.

The Syrian uprising that started in spring 2011 and still continuing up to the present gaining a serious casualty on its people, becomes a major headline in the Middle East international politics. The simple protest to express some isolated grievances was accorded with a harsh action by the current regime. With the unproportionte tactics engaged by the security forces and army against those participated the protest, has resulted to an increasing reaction from the population. The violence suddenly broke out of control that fell into a civil war causing the whole country to disintegration from the social and political norms with some parts of it being controlled by the current regime and others by the opposition (Dalacoura, 2013:76-77).

Although the Syrian conflict is seen as one of the results of the Arab uprising that started in 2010, it was also believed that it can be traced back by how President Bashar Al-Assad rule the country and its people. According to an article written by Majid Rifazadeh in 2013 of "*The Atlantic*", when Assad first took the power in 2000, his goal is to modernize Syria by introducing Damascus Spring – a period for freedom of expression that include for the release of political prisoners and implementing new economic reforms suitable to Assad's vision of an open and modern society. Additionally, Assad also implemented neo-liberal economic policies

that shook the economic balance in the country, making the poor poorer, weakening the already weak middle class, and paving the way for the emergence of a few lords connected to the Assad's family.

In the same article, (Rifazadeh, 2013: 1) further, explains that by 2001 the reforms that Assad has envisioned finds it quick end, and the government started cracking down on the political forums that was growing stronger and recoursed to the old ways of governance, relying on the secret security forces to ensure strict implementation of his demands. The obvious division of the rich and poor as a result of Assad's new neo-liberal economic system coupled with the repression on the freedom of expression have caused to lit a fire of resistance that turned into what we call now as the Syrian Uprising of 2011, simply asking for the basic human rights – social justice, freedom of expression as well as human dignity.

Similar to the Syrian civil war, conflicts often begin with just a small number of protesters that can lead to something big. In the case of Syrian conflict, it started by a group of young children in the small city of Deraa when they wrote on the wall "the people want to topple the regime" with a graffiti. The children have been arrested, tortured and punished for their scribbling on the school wall (Mishkov,2015: 1). The response from the current regime to this protest was beyond imagination. The regime's attempt to destroythelargest uprising in Syrian history into submission has fallen into a regionalized civil war giving rise to divide the country into various opposition as well as extremist's groups and ultimately evolving into a regional proxy warmaking the conflict even harder to resolve (Ali, 2015: 1).

The pace of the deterioration of the Syria conflict, for more than six years now, is such that humanitarian catastrophe is spreading throughout the whole region. In addition to the human suffering inflicted, one can observe that this conflict is deeply destroying the traditional fabric of the Syrian society and also seriously endangering the stability of the neighboring countries, Lebanon and Jordan in particular, with no immediate prospect of an end in sight (European Commission Report, 2013)

Following is an overview of the extent of the damages since the crisis in Syria started in 2011. The data is based from the report provided by the World Vision on December 4, 2015.

Table 2.1 - Syria Fast Facts

13.5 million are in humanitarian needs.
4.3 million refugees, half are children, 6.6 million displaced within Syria.
Most Syrian refugees remain in the Middle East – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey; thousands of refugees traveled to Europe. Turkey is hosting more than 1,9 million Syrian refugees. Iraq, facing its own armed conflict, is hosting about 250,000 Syrians. More than 1,1 million refugees are in Lebanon. Many have taken up residence in communities with abandoned buildings, sheds, spare rooms, garages, and in tent settlements on vacant land. About 630,000 refugees have settled in Jordan, mostly with host families or in rented accommodations. About 80,000 live in Za'atari, a camp near the northern border with Syria, and about 23,700 live in another camp, Azraq.
Children are the most affected by the conflict and are at risk of various deseases, malnourished, abused, or exploited. Millions are forced to quit school.

Four major risks children are facing as a result of the conflict:

Susceptibility to malnutrition and diseases resulting from poor sanitation, causing diarrheal diseases like cholera.
Many refugee children are forced to work to support their families. Often thrown to dangerous labor or degrading circumstances for a very little pay.
Children are often vulnerable to sexual abuse and exploitation. Without adequate income to support their families and fearful of their daughters being harrasment, parents— especially single mothers — may opt to arrange marriage for girls, some as young as 13.
Between 2 million and 3 million children are not attending school. The UN children's agency says the war reversed 10 years of progress in education for Syrian children.

The on-going chaos had caused significant crisis for the local population. As Syrian opposition forces expel the regime's troops in more and more areas over Syria, municipal services often stop or experience severe interruptions, with poverty steadily rising as Syria's civil war continues without pause, particularly in the liberated areasheld by the opposition, where the central government is functioning

since the start of the revolution. In this vacuum who is there to provide basic public services such as electricity, water, healthcare, and education? (Salmon, 2013: 1)

Unlike Egypt and Tunisia that their government have remained intact after the revolution, in Syria a new form of governance has come to existence. This in itself is worth celebrating and supporting (Salmon, 2013: 1). However, there has been many problems which have basically made it impossible for these institutions to function, which is the focus of this research.

CHAPTER THREE

THE STATE OF THE ART: LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS IN SYRIA

3.1. THE BIRTH OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS IN SYRIA

The concept of the establishment of the Local Administrative Councils (LAC) in Syria is believed to be envisioned by an activist Omar Aziz (known as Abu Kamel by his friends), a known Syrian intellectual and economist. The outline of the creation of the local councils was prepared even before the uprising occurred and the whole country was under the current regime's control (Hassan, 2013: 1).

In an account written by Budour Hassan in his blog after Aziz's sudden death in February 2013 inside the prison cell in Damascus, he described hisaspiration the local council has to beestablished on the basis that social order should be an outcome of an unusualphenomenon in which human beings live in two parallel time zones: *the time of authority* and *the time of revolution, w*here the interplay of life in a revolution is an important ingredient for its sustainance and its sucess. Hassan in further wrote that in the time of a revolution, it requires a socially flexible structure that is based on the collaboration between the revolution and the daily lives of humans. This form of structure will be called: **the local council**. For a change to bevictorious, it must break free from the control of the regime forces and become actively and freely involved in every aspect of people's lives, not just in political activism and eventual protest.

Since the outbreak of the Syrian uprising, Syrian people are suffering from all kinds of regime violence, torture, continued artillery shelling and aerial bombardment, and often chemical weapons attacks. As in the case of northern Syria and other areas where the regime forces have been pulled out, some communities are

equally struggling with the presence of oppressive Islamist group (Jihadist). As a result, many towns and villages are suffering from harsh attacks, extreme humanitarian crises and massive population displacement.

The development of the grassroot-led local administrative councils all over Syria is one bright spot at the end of the long and dark tunnel. In the absence of government to serve the people, the local citizens organized themselves to take the role of the local government to provide basic services, justice courts and humanitarian needs (Salmon, 2013: 1). The Syrian crisis haspaved the way for a number of '**ungoverned spaces**' in areas that are not under the control of the government. However, it should be understood that ungoverned spaces do not mean that it lacks governance – all sort of governance where there are inhabitants. These spaces arewhen a legitimate government control has been surrendered with other actors (other than legally recognized sovereign authorities) (Clunan and Trinkunas, 2010: 17-18).

In the middle of worst possible condition, a democratic form of local governments has taken root across Syria. Citizens have established local councils to maintain order, organize protection and security, and provide basic services. A local government revolution is underway, and it echoes successful examples of state-building from the ground-up in fragile and conflict-affected contexts around the world (van den Berg and Warren, 2015: 1).

Crucial to the creation of the local councils, (van Berg and Warren, 2015: 1) indicated the necessity of coordination between the local councils with local military battalions and the Free Syrian Army (FSA).In the ptovince of Idlib alone, over 50 local councils existed and considered as a major component of the ongoing crisis and to any current and future intervention whether military, political or humanitarian, it is important to understand the role they play with the other actors and how better these local councils are supported.

A fascinating argument made by (O'Halloran, 2005: 48) with regards to the development of effective governance is the application of the "structural-functional" theory, which explains that for each government institution such as hospitals, jails, police, schools, utilities, and waste management, to mention a few is clearly defined according to its function for the promotion of social stability in the community. By strengthening these institutions could result to a unified system of functional parts in a well-balanced and stable governance reconstruction. Reconstruction and re-

building of institutional capacity and legitimacy through the delivery of basic needs and services, should be the priority following a collapsed government (Kalu, 2011: 134-135).

However, argues that eventhough the Local Councils in Syria have lessened the sufferings of the people by taking the role from the absent government in delivering some provisionsof public services such as humanitarian needs, while othersare working on various projects and advocacy, the challenges facing by this newly formed civil society are too many. The aim of these councils as a future democratic state are forced to respond first to the immediate needs as a result of the conflict like responding to humanitarian needs. Khalaf also added that due to varying conditions on the ground, the local councils are not in the same level of effectiveness and independence and therefore remain fragmented, weak and limited in their scope (resources and security) (Khalaf, 2014:45-47).

To cite a few examples of Khalaf's argument, (Khoury, 2013:6) described the inter-play among the various elements of the local councils in Syria that weakens the foundation of the councils:

> *"It maybeseen that the local rebels and the FSA shared a common cause in the fight against the Assad regime, but, disagreement in terms of priorities exists. While the local activists prefer to limit damages and casualties in order to protect the people, the FSA's priority is to defeat and take control of the key areas in various towns".*
> *"In some parts of the province, brigade leaders started acting as commanders, professing freed areas as their own territory. In some cases, the FSA themselves committed human right violations, like kidnapping and extortions, extra judicial killings and lootings. Local activists claim that behavior like this could destroy the efforts in building civilian structures. The same accused some FSA's are acting in this way on behalf of the Assad's regime with the goal to undermine the cause of the revolution".*

Despite of the numerous challenges that the local councils are facing across Syria, examples of successful cooperation between the civilian and armed rebel groupsespecially in Idlib province where the local councils have remained intact and strong, despite the presence of the various militia groups.

3.2. THE EMERGENCE AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS IN THE LIBEATED AREAS IN THE PROVINCE OF IDLIB (2011-2014)

3.2.1. General Information About Idlib

An article published by the Syrian Economic Forum entitled "Economics for Idlib" in 2015 reported that Idlib province was formed in 1958 by then the United Arab Republic. It lies on 60 km to the west of Aleppo with a land area of 6,100 sq.km. Idlib is in close proximity to the Turkish border, Bab Al Hava, with only 30 km away. This shared-border crossing is important trade crossing between Syria and Turkey. Before the war, Idlib's population was reported to be about 1,500,000. The province is divided into five districts: ArihaDistrict, Harem District, Jisr Shoghor District, Ma'art Nouma'an District and the city of Idlib where all central as well as government offices are situated.

Idlib province is very important strategic passage trade routes for Turkey and Syria. It is the connection from the coastal regons to the north and east regions. About 65% of the population is in to agriculture where the rural areas are famous for growing olives and olive products. According to the statistics, an estimated 3 million olive trees are grown in Idlib because of its fertile soil and suitable climate. There are more than 160 press machines operating in various areas making Idlib province to control the production of olives and olive oil business inside Syria.

Other than the growing of olives, Idlib province is also famous for growing figs and the production of tons and tons of dried figs in a traditional way and making it the number one producer in Syria. Other crops that Idlib produce are wheat, cotton, spices and barley.

In terms of industry, Idlib is well-known for the production of footwear, tahini, halva, soap and molasses operated by a number of industrial enterprises with a potential working market environment the other surrounding the areas.

Political wise, Idlib is a very good example. (Lund, 2016: 1) Before 2011, Idlib province was oncestagnantin terms of Syrian politics, being dominated by a rural, poor and conservative Sunni Arab community. Having not been well represented in Assad's government in Damascus, the tie between the influencial families and the regime has never been relaxed but instead full of desperations since the Baath Party came into power in the 1960's.

However, Idlib province has tood firm by showing its capacity as compared to the other marginalized Sunni community like those in Deir al-Zor and Deraa, which eventually produced successful members and officers as well as politicians to the regime. As a result, Idlib governorate experienced little scrutiny from the regime except when the president sent Syrian forces to subdue some Islamist groups
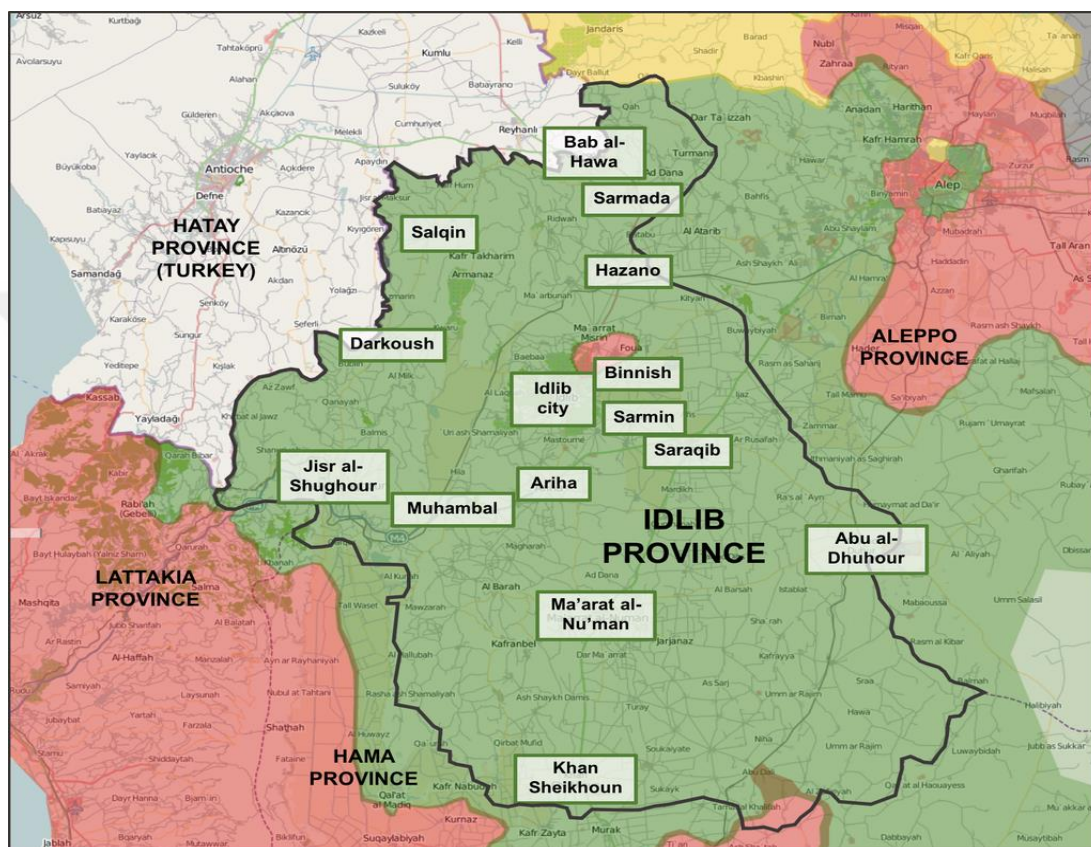
Map 3.1 - Map of Idlib District in Syria (map credit: The Century Foundation)

3.2.2. Idlib: in Light of the Revolution

It is believed that if there were actuallya civil uprising in Syria, it would have had to bein Idlib. Idlib is the "heartland of the Syrian opposition". There is only a handful of Syrian towns and villages where Islamist fighters would get popular support and protection from Syrian citizens, and Idlib is on the top of that list. To conquer Idlib means you have conquered the heart-beat of the Syrian-based fundamentalism. Oppositions in Idlib desired to establish an alternative government to the regime's administration. Unfortunately, this vision did not prosper due to a couple of factors; the internal rivalries and the unfriendly relationships between the local opposition administrators within Syria and with the international donors abroad.

In this respect, Idlib'sdirection seems to mirror a broader dynamics of Syria's civil war and divided oppositions (Heller, 2016: 1).

Sam Heller in his article written for the Century Foundation wrote thatIdlib province joined the rank of the protesters in fighting the regime's rule in spring of 2011 and became the stronghold of Syrian's armed revolt, where the first significant clash between the early rebel-armed groups and the regime's military forces took place in the town of Jish al-Shughour in the western part of Idlib in June 2011.It is important to note that the southern part of Idlib in the mountainous city of Jabal al-Zawiyah, operated as the key stronghold of the rebellion and emerging opposition factions, of which subsequently produced some most of the powerful rebel squadron in the country.

During the early time of the Syrian conflict, the city of Idlib was known as the fortress for the pro-democracy protests and the Free Syrian Army (FSA), a US supported rebel group. After the rebel groups left Homs in May 2014, Idlib became the reserve and source of personnels in many areas in Syria. Many observers and spectators predict that the success in Idlib will fall in the hands of the extremists group, but to some it offers a different perspective as an opportunity to support the opposition forces in line with the international thiking.

The removal of the Assad's forces from Idlib is seen as a major push on the Syrian civil war that extended up to the north and south. The report is saying that Idlib falls under the brutal hands of al-Qaeda do not tell the actual situation on the ground (Ghanem, 2015: 1).

In his article on July 2016 for the *"The Century Foundation",* Aaron Lund has written that with the fragmented actions of various opposition groups as well as the strong presence of the extremist and jihadists groups, it is uncertain where the war is heading, and who is ultimately winning. But one can attest that with the loosing control and support of Assad from the general population, this can be seen as his loss of Idlib, and most probably it can never be taken hold back again. With this situation it provides a serious indication of how Idlib looks like in the future as much as it is like at the present. It seems that Idlib would be unsettled and chaotic blended of local warlords rather than a country aiming to unite people in different affiliations. Furthermore, since Assad is unlikely to take back control on the half of the country where his rule was totally pulled out caused by the revolt, no one of his opponents appears to be any better to replace it (Lund, 2016: 1).

Similarly, (Sherlock, 2015: 1) of the *Telegraph*, at the very beginning of the Syrian civil war, Idlib became the center of the violence. As the conflict turned into armed contest, Idlib has been the center of a rebel movement that initially seized the city even before the regime offensive in April 2012, afterwhich, the regime forces regained the city and the rebel-controlled province after a month of fighting, this was before the intended implementation of the ceasefire as proposed by Kofi Annan. After the attack in Idlib in March 2015, the rebel alliance - Army of Conquest - succeeded in recapturing the city again in Second Battle of Idlib, as well as taking over the Shi'a-dominated towns of Al-Fu'ah and Kafriya to the north of Idlib city.

3.2.3. The formation of the Local Administrative Councils (LAC) in Idlib

While the military forces of Assad never rest in taking back of the central areas in 2016, the rebel-held in Idlib province increasingly became the heart of the uprising in the north of the country, the dynamic center of the armed opposition. As the sole province, almost entirely under rebel control, Idlib emerged as a key proving ground for Syria's rebels as they sought to demonstrate how they would govern Syria's "liberated" areas.

City and townlevel local councils as well as subsidiary, village-level "branch councils" have filled the service and governance void left by the Assad regime across Idlib province and Syria's other rebel-held areas. As with nearly everything in Syria's war, arrangements for local governance vary from one area to the next and from town to town, but councils typically amount to a central administrative council and a set of specialized executive offices focused on areas like relief and municipal services (Heller, 2016: 1).

Following is an extract of the report conducted in 2014 for the Institute of the Middle East Studies of the Elliot School of International Affairs in George Washington University:

The formation of the local councils in the province of Idlib immediately started after its liberation in July and December 2012. The councils created temporary working groups with the main goal to restore the delivery of basic municipal services though thisworking groups need to learn more and increase their capacity following the creation of the local councils. Due to the proven success as an alternative governing body, these local councils are immediately accepted and recognized by the armed-groups, locals, and the Syrian National Council (SNC).

About 144 local councils and 30 city councils were reported that were formed in the whole province of Idlib of which the Saraqib local council alone is responsible for about 150,000 locals with 13 subordinate branch councils including its surrounding areas.

These councils were formed in 2012 depend on financial support from international organizations and investment projects. There are many tasks awaiting the local councils, and the problems they are facing are huge in light of the increasing necessities for the residents and lack of resources of the councils. At the same time, and according to the representatives of the councils, work is still continuing through implementing small projects or starting local voluntary campaigns to deliver a certain service (Suliman and Mohammad, 2016: 1).

They regularlyprovide lists of names as the recipients of aids and help organize and monitor efficient relief distribution, that includes a house-to-house visit with donor or sponsor organizations' representatives to deliver the assistanc they need like food baskets for example (Heller, 2016: 1).

3.3. THE HINDRANCES FOR THE EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT FUNCTIONING OF THE LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCILS

In areas where violent conflicts are taking place, one of the most crucial questions that springs up is the right to represent whom specially when there is presence of extreme political and social division as well as the interference of armed groups.

(Menkhaus, 2014: 74-75) argues that in areas that there is conflict, local leadership is not necessary a remedy. In many violent instances, system of local governanceis not consideredlegitimate and therefore must not be idealized. Leadership includes military defectors and become warlords to protect vigilantes or competing tribal and influencial families with no purpose but to advance their own interest at the expense of others. (Justino, 2012: 2-3) also added that in some

instances the local leadership composed of political figures with a different agenda that seeks in advancing their own personal ambitions. They manipulate and maneuver the aids and assistance that is supposed to be intended for the suffering population thereby affecting negatively the lives and livelihood of the people living under their governance.

Nonetheless, (Menkhaus 2014: 74-75) further pointed out how the local governance both in conflict and post-conflict conditions execute their roles in providing security, and administrative functions such as basic law and solving internal desputes. He further stated that in right instances, creating a legitimate local leadership can be of a help in the hopes for a wider level of representation to give voice into a wider discussion of peace process.

The Human Rights Council Advisory Committee on their report to the General Assembly of United Nations on August 2015 described how a decision-making process can affect the daily lives in the grassroots level by aiming for the local government as the link between the local citizens and the central government. The local government are more knowledgeable in dealing matters related to the local priorities and needs.

Interestingly enough, the Human Rights Council mentioned in the same report in 2015, the three main challenges of the local government in the execution of their functions – political, economic and administrative.

The same was pointed out by (Brinkerhoff, 2008:5-6) as he mentioned that in order forany society to be effective in governance, it must fulfill a set of major functions: assuring and maintining security, delivering basic public services efficiently and effectively, and providing legitimacy. Governments may vary in terms of how good or how poor their governance system in fulfilling these functions.

The governance system, according to Brinkerhoff can be divided into three main functions and sub-systems that are highly interconnected:

➢ **Security governance**: local government should uphold the norms and laws of the society with the desired aim for the protection and security of the people they serve. Security includes dealing with illegal activity and crime, cross border intrusions, protecting people's property. The local government should make sure that in implementing this important function should exercise legitimate force and maintain the rule of law.

➢ **Administrative-economic governance:** central to the local government's function is the delivery of services effectively and efficiently to the population they serve. Their aim is to provide services in quantity and quality according to the needs. Under this function, the local government should also provide economic opportunities based upon regulations and existing policies that has been agreed upon by the majority of the population.

➢ **Political governance**: local government should sustain and continuously seek legitimacy through segragation of powers, accountability of actions, proper representation and inclusiveness, and the preservation of basic human rights for all citizens. The goal of the local government is to make sure that the opportunity is applied to all and transparency in information and eventual contestaton of power through election is protected.

With the many challenges the local councils are facing on their day to day life on the ground, they are important machine for the assurance in fulfilling certain task in the community. They are one among many others if not the best one to operate in providing public services. Their role can be both implementers (like in the case of assuring sufficient supply of bread, water and energy and that garbage are regularly picked up) and coordinators/mediators (with the civil defense, various projects in health and education). Reports show that their effectiveness also depends on their location as the case of the local councils in the provinces of Aleppo and Idlib that lies within the proximity to Turkey and therefore have more access to the border the elsewhere like those local councils in the south near Jordan that are experiencing unfriendly policies near its borders. Their efficiency and effectiveness can also be factored on their relationship with the civil organizations as well as with the armed militia groups operating in their areas.

In an article written by NouriddinAbddo in November 2015 entitled *"Democracy in Free Syria in Constantly under Threat",* he explained the local councils in Aleppo and Idlib are experiencing failure in their best efforts in attempting to establish a strong, democratic civil administrative governance in the space left by the current regime. Although, their challenges differ in many aspects, one thing apparent to a successful local governance is the direct threat arising from the regime itself and the Islamist groups who are there attemping to discredit any democratic systems the local councils promote.

In Idlib province alone, differences exist among the local councils, although they have similar priorities. Their priority is to deliver basic services and goods to their respective areas – relief goods, medical supplies, humanitarian needs and even security. On the other hand, militias or the armed rebel groups plays a vital role in Idlib by controlling legal and security system. They provide consent for who will be in the council membership either by appointment or elected. This civil-military relationship is necessary to be effective in governance and in seeking legitimacy. It is proven that that councils who can deliver tangible goods and services can secure more spaces and authority to govern and because they receive popular support from the majority of the people, militias keep their pace in confronting these local councils who are working effectively for the people (Martin, 2014: 11-12).

3.3.1. Relation Between the Armed-Groups (Militia) and the Local Councils

Militias need the local councils as the intermediary between them and the people in maintaining support for the advocacy they are figting in, while local councils need the armed groups for security reasons and in gaining legitimacy from influencial members of the community. Acceptance of funding and aid from international donors and to deliver services and goodsto their local areas is often conditional on the aproval from the armed groups (Favier, 2016: 6-8).

In keeping the relationship with the armed groups, local councils keep their distance to go head-to-head from them. It is said that in order for the local councils to maintain its space to work independently, it should maintain its good relationship with the rebel group operating in the area, who belongs to a moderate group and protect the local councils from any possible assault from extremist groups. In late 2013, there was an attempt from the ISIL to take control of Idlib but successfully defeated by the armed groups and pushed away in January 2014.

As in Saraqeb, which is dominated by Sunni of around 30,000 in Idlib Governorate, both the activists and militia groups came together to form administrative and legislative bodies.

A very good example is the Revolutionary Front that was formed in December 2013 by the Free Syrian Army (FSA) and now one of the recognized strongest local armed groups in Saraqeb. The group worked with the activist groups and local councils to form an independent civil justice body with the goal to

descourage violations by security brigades operating in the area (Elhamoui and Al-Hawat, 2011: 1-5).

In some instances, cooperation between the local councils and the armed groups is impossible. There is always hostility between them. The armed group makes their efforts to challenge their role as an independent local institution. (Elhamoui and al-Hawat, 2015: 1-5) For instance in Maaret al-Numan (Idlib Governorate), Jabhat-al-Nusrat (JN) (in Turkish El NusraCephesi) interfere on the people's lives by imposing dress codes for the school girls and women. In response, the local went to the streets and protested and as a result the armed group lift up the restrictions. In another situation, after refusing wearing hijab as asked by an armed group, a certain well-known activist in the area was arrested. A group of local activists approached political institution and donors funding the group and the detainee was discharged after the armed group was given warning to stop the support.

Report analyses and evaluates of four of the local councils in Idlib and their related structures in terms of origin, effectiveness, existing needs, and potentialities.

3.3.1.1. The Local Administrative Council of Kafr Nabl

Kafr Nabl is a town located in Idlib Governorate and the Ma'arrat al-Numan District in northwestern Syria. Historically, Kafr Nabl is a Romanian word meaning "the noblemen's farm", as it is famous for growing fruit trees like figs, olives and pistachios. The town is also famous for their mosaic crafting. According to the 2004 census by the Syrian Central Bureau of Statistics, Kafr Nabl had a population of 15,455 and majority are Sunnis (Yazigi, 2015: 1).

During the uprising, Kafr Nabl was the first city where a banner was held up indicating the date and place of the demonstration, as a response to Syrian media allegations claiming that all the demonstrations were being staged.

Up until August 2012, Kafr Nabl was under the regime control and then liberated by the Free Syrian Army but the regime forces continued to attack the town resulted to many death tolls of many martyrs and crushed many of the properties and houses. Due to the frequent closure of the border to Turkey which is about 100 kilometers away from the town, the people suffered from extremely high market

prices. On August 28, 2012, the townhad suffered heavy aerial bombardments that made it known as the Kafr Nabl Massacre.

Kafr Nabl local council was formed in April 2013 but the selection for who will sit in the council was not easy at all with the differing ideas as to the qualifications and requirments of the future members. Some suggested to be some one who is well-educated, others prefer those of military backgrounds or member of the revolutionary group. From the rank of the defected military commanders, insisted that members should come from the militias. After a long and hot debate, conditions were set that members should be civilians, of which majority of the people showed their strong support that it should be well educated civilians and not to choose from military, armed groups or revolutionaries.

Finally, the selection process was agreed to break down to each family surname who sends a representative for every 1,200 members of that family or clan and serves in the council and other committees. The same representatives are also had the opportunity to vote for the president of the local council.

There was a water shortage in many liberated areas, and the people in Kafr Nabl are hopeful of revivingthe water pumping plans. This ambitious project was first initiated in June 2014 by the Union of Revolutionary Bureaus in Maarat al-Numan. There were five wells drilled of which two are linked to the main source that can reach up to Kafr Nabl and its surrounding localities. The project was completed in 2015 and the Bureau handed the responsibility over to the local council of Kafr Nabl (al-Ahmad, 2017: 1).

For some reasons, the ownership of the wells was transferred to a private entity who are selling at high prices that became a burden to the local. The cost is too high considering the living conditons of the people. After some time, the Humanitarian Relief Organization, an NGO, in coordination with the local council in Kafr Nabl took back the water project from the private entity with the plan to provide water in all parts of the town as well as the neighboring localities. Since the water project is an essential need of the people, the local council was authorized in pumping the water and to finish the work of the remaining wells (al-Ahmad 2017: 1).

3.3.1.2. The Local Administrative Council of Ma'Arrat al-Numan

According to the World Heritage Encyclopedia, Ma'Arrat al-Numan is a town in the north-west of Syria and according to the 2004 census, the population was about 58,008. The town lies between Aleppo and Hama and near the Dead Cities of Bara and Serjilla. Historically, the town is known as Arra to the Greeks and Marre to the Crusaders, and gained its present-day name combined of the traditional name and of its first Muslim governor an-Nu'man ibn Bashir, means the companion of Muhammad.

Before the Syrian uprising, the town was known for being fertile. According to the relief organizations, after the regime started suppressing the peaceful protest, most of the inhabitants fled the town, many have been killed and thousand of properties and houses as well as schools destroyed. Population was reduced to a few thousands.

The town's main source of electricity was razed to the ground and there is no running wateraspipes were all bombed and repairing them would mean approaching an Assad forces base close by. Hospitals were destroyed, schools shut down, and up until only a few months ago, no markets or bakeries were open. Internet and phonelines are down. The only way to communicate is face to face or via walkie talkies (Jasiewicz, 2013).

During the civil, the town becomes a strategic positon between Damascus and Aleppo. As of October 8, 2012, the Battle of Maarrat al-Nu'man was fought between the Free Syrian Army and the regime, causing high civilian casualties and severe material damage (Jasiewicz, 2013).

The local council of Ma' Arrat al-Numan was formed after a year from its liberation due to internal disputes and personal rivalries among its members. Even when the council was in placed but still not in the position to provide services with the reason that there are no sufficient funds to operate. In order to keep the council alive, members have had to shoulder the bill for all of the council's expenses, even building the office was paid for with the members' own personal pocket (Abdallah, et al, 2015: 1).

The councils were not exempted from the opposition of the armed group militia including the Islamic State (ISIS) and the Nusra Front (Jabhat al-Nusra), who seek to interfere in their activities. In some areas, the councils received direct threats

from ISIS and Jabhat al-Nusra, yet, in some parts of the country, local councils claim they have received widespread support. The local council is doing a "great" job. There are offices for all types of services. There is even an office to organize funeral and cemetery services.

With poverty steadily rising as Syria's civil war continues without pause, local councils do not collect taxes or charge for services. The local residents are already struggling to put food on the table and it doesn't make any sense to enforce fines or charge people for services at this time. People can't afford food, so providing food has actually become one of the council's tasks.

Though the vast majority of these councils do not include female members or employees, public criticism successfully pressured at least one to allow female participation. Last month, the city council in Maarat al-Numan – a city in northwestern Syria – designated two of its 25 seats for women (Abdallah, et al, 2015: 1).

Maarat al-Numan's local council is presently considering the establishment of an office for women's affairs, although these changes were not publicly celebrated by the council for fear that hardline Islamist armed groups may interfere.

3.3.1.3. The Local Administrative Council of Saraqib (Saraqeb)

Saraqib or Saraqeb is situated in the north-west of Syria in the east of Idlib although belongs to the Idlib Governorate. The city's geographical placement made it an important connecting point between the main roads of Aleppo-Damascus, Aleppo-Latakia and Aleppo-Idlib. This location explains the regime's insistence on controlling the city as well as its repetitive and attempts to place military posts around the city and inside of it (Creative Memory, 2015, homepage: https://creativememory.org/press/).

In November 15, 2012, the Saraqeb Social and Cultutral Forum in Saraqeb was formed after the city was liberated by the rebel-opposition forces. After its formation, the group's initial activity was the organization for an election of the local governing council in Saraqeb. It was an overwhelming and significant with more then 1,300 locals participated the event.

However, the newly formed local governance faced problems from the various armed-groups in the area that opposes the creation of local councils hence the

council had difficulty in seeking legitimacy and independence (Syria Untold, 2017: 1). However, the group faces a multitude of challenges to their operations. Mainly from the constant bombardment of the town by Assad's forces, and emptying of its people in favour of safer places. They also face a significant amount of harassment and difficulty in dealing with the local opposition militias. Finally, the lack of funding has been a hinderance for expanding their activities further (Saraqeb Social and Cultural Forum, Syria Untold 2015).

The lack of dissemination of information of what is the factual situation inside Syria is an added factor to the problem. The original source of news about the events taking over inside Syria is very limited, which is not helpful to have a better idea of the dynamics on the ground (Peace Direct, 2014: 1). The regular and up-to-date news and information to the people of Saraqeb is important to the people in order for them to learn more and understand the role of the local councils it plays in governance and services it provides to the people. In this way, the local councils gain more visibility and eventually legitimacy to the authorities much more to the citizens they serve (Peace Direct, 2014: 1).

A good example for this is when the local council with limited resources, need to increase the tax on bread. This action made the whole population angry as they are already experiencing difficulty in meeting the old price. Somebody made the story about this increase, reached out to people, talked to the bakers and council members then concluded that the extra tax that the council is imposing to the bread is needed very badly for the gasoline that is required to keep the bakeries running. This resulted to a better understanding with the people in maintaining regular and sufficient production of bread hence the extra fees are necessary (Saraqeb Social and Cultural Forum, Syria Untold, 2015).

Another important source of news and information for the locals about the activities and works of the local council is the radio station. Since the Saraqeb local council has not been elected but created at the time of violence and in war, the radio station is the best place to express the people's opinion and thoughts about their legitimacy. Majority wanted election. As much as the council wanted to, there is no mechanism and resources to hold a proper election. This only proves the dynamics between the uninformed and informed population.

There is a serious problem of sharing information in the popultion of what is happening in the town. There are social initiatives inSaraqeb, but in general people

are not well informed on what the projects are about, who the sponsor is, and who will benefit. What the people only know is the amount of money it involved. This can create misunderstanding and conflict so that it is important that proper information should be shared to the citizens about any project the local council initiates. In some instances, people start rumors and the effects of rumors, speculation and wrong information can undermine the social connections between different strata of the local community, be an ethnic group, religious organizations, or socio-economic and could bring more potential confrontations within the community life in addition to the already existing conflict surrounding the area. Such occurrence would make efforts even harder for the reconstruction of a peaceful and harmonious communit life (Saraqeb Social and Cultural Forum, Syria Untold, 2015).

3.3.1.4. The Local Administrative Council of Salqeen (or Salqin)

Salqeen or Salqin is a town of Idlib governorate that lies near the border of Turkey.Historically, the town was under the controlof a few big and influencial families having a strong tie with Assad although, it had joined the revolution in the early days of the civil war of which the feared militia created by Assad called the Al-Shabiha responded violently. After an enduring fight which was won by the opposition, the town was finally liberated in September 2012. The regime's position in the town was re-inforced by the Al-Dwaile air force base for which the opposition successfully gained control of the air force and the entire town and at which time the local councils started to develop (Martin, 2014: 49-50).

The first governing body to be formed was a temporary coordinating group that evolved into a leadership body until finally the official local council came into existence in February 2014.

Prior to February 2014, the first versions of the local councils had very limited power and space due to the competing armed groups who controlled the town. The ISIS even for a short period of time, has controlled the town making it impossible for the civil governance to operate. After the ISIS were defeated by the Syrian Revolutionary Front (SRF), both the SRF and FSAgroups represented in Salqeen, and in favor for the civil governance and in-turn give the council space to govern.

The local council that was formed in February 2014 has gained a wide support from the people. Membership consists mostly of activists, government officials defected from the regime, a lawyer and a doctor. With the irregularity and limited source of funding mainly provided by the local organizations and foreign aids, the council managed to function well and consistently provide services in the areas of medical services, relief and aids, education, municipal services and many more. Besides lack of funding, other challenges of the council were the competing armed groups and the possible re-taking the town by the extremist jihadist.

According to the report, the crime rate in Salqeen is low. Citizens are more concerned with competingmilitias among themselves than the crime or security issues. The council also values communication and collaboration with nearby town councils and is looking for ways to interact more regularly with other councils (Martin, 2014: 49-50).

CHAPTER FOUR

EFFECTS OF LOCAL COUNCILS TO THE INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

4.1. UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

Despite of the repeated international interventions and efforts to manage, Syria is still entrapped in conflict for over six years now after the first protest in Deraa in 2011 was staged. The forces of President Bashar al-Assad are freely on the go in seizing opposition-held towns and villages in stages and bit by bit after the efforts of the recent moves in mediating negotiations for a ceasefire failed. The country remains fragmented; added to the disorder is the differing visions from various actors of the drama making up the opposition with one obvious aim from democracy to theocracy. Assad on the other hand remains firm in controlling nationwide while the Sunni Arab community continues to attempt to take the power from him (Laub, 2017: 1).

In the case of the US government stand in finding a diplomatic solution to the Syrian conflict, the US in partner with the group of nations known as the "London 11" is firmed that the way to move forward to the crisis and in finding solution to the conflict is to support the Final Communique initiated by the Action Group meeting in Geneva in 30 June 2012. The US government is actively and vigorously working for the advancement of the transition in Syria based from the Communique contained in in "Geneva II" international conference: a transitional governing body must be established based from mutual consent, the full executive powers for all government instituions should be exercised and preserved, the review of the constitutional order and legal systems with the aim to conduct fair and free elections. Inspite of the UN efforts to sponsor the two rounds of negotiation in

Geneva, there seems no progress that has been made with the continuing refusal of Assad regime to seriously engage in the negotiations.

Furthermore, efforts are advancing by the allies and other partners of the Syrian opposition in seeking in isolating further the Assad regime politically and by imposing more sanctions as a support for those Syrian people calling for an end of his power and thus strengthening the opposition's vision for a democratic post-Assad Syria (US Department of State, Office of the Spokesperson, Washington DC, March 2014).

Meanwhile, Assad is accusing the US of destabilizing foreign nations intentionally and expressed in a strong tone that he is prepared to win the more than six years war for Syria to have a clearer and greater future (O'connor, 2017: 1).

In an interview made by a Croatian newspaper – Vecernji List – and quoted in the same article - Newsweek, calling the US government for training and equipping Syrian rebels under the former President Obama, criticizing Washington for deploying military to support the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF) in the fight against the ISIL. Assad again reiterated his conviction to end the conflict within months with no support from outside.

The continuing unfriendly gestures between the White House and Assad's government in addition to the already on-going tension resulting from the armed-conflict caused the US government to suspend its operations in Damascus effective February 2012. Similarly, the State Department issued notification to the Syrian Embassy on March 18, 2014 to suspend their operations immediately including the departure of all non-US citizens by March 31, 2014 (US Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs, March 2014).

It is interesting to note that despite the bitter relationship of the two countries, the US government's policy towards Syria remains the same and consistent in supporting humanitarian crisis resulting from the conflict as well as extending aids in helping displaced Syrians and refugees scaping Syria. The US policy also includes supporting the Syrian people's hopes and dreams for an inclusive, unified, and democratic Syria as well as the assistance provided to the moderate Syrian opposition on direct and non-lethal aids.

As the United States continues its commitment to work shoulder to shoulder withand through the local partners inside Syria in defeating and crushing the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria's (ISIS), conducting counter-terrorism activities against the

al- Qaeda and its allies and with the decision to reduceUSA's support in the west of Syria, the greatest challenge of Trump's government facing in Syria remains the same as his predecessor**:** how to end the conflict in Syria which is the root cause of other problems spreading beyond borders? (Kahl, et al, 2017: 1-2).

4.2. RUSSIA, IRAN, AND TURKEY TRILATERAL RELATIONSHIP TOWARDS SYRIA

Russia, Iran and Turkey – three countries with different opinions and interest on the Syrian conflict but in recently came together with a more friendship manner leaving the American out of the play.

The Russians re-established itself to be the key regional player. As a co-sponsor of the International Syria Support Group (ISSG), analliance consists of 20 countries and organizations aimed to facilitate a diplomatic solution for the Syrian conflict, strengthens Russia's position as an international and a regional power to be regarded and ensures that future political arrangements in Syria guarantee only its interests (Slim, 2016: 1).

Turkey's policy in Syria is changing, depending on the realities on the ground, Turkish stand for Syria is flexible. With Assad still in power and the rising in power of the Islamic State, has made Turkey's allies to especially the west to change their direction from their original agenda of removing the current regime from power. Therefore, Turkey seems left isolated in engaging its goal which at the end has proven useless against the unqualified support of Russia and Iran to Assad's regime (Ulgen, 2016: 1).

Meanwhile, Iran is conducting a multi-faceted strategy in Syria with a goal of guaranteeing direct access from Iraq to Lebanon –the home of the Hezbollah - is an essential part of its policy. Another significant aspect in the Iranian policy in Syria is to create a strong foothold in the southwest of Syria, in proximity to the Israeli occupied Golan Heights. Equally essential for Iran is to secure assurance from the Assad's leadership is to prevent the Kurds or other sectarian and ethnic groups of a possible formation of their own state in the post-Islamic State environment.

In an article written by Pavil Golovkin for The Moscow Times, in December 2016, he wrote that the new Syrian cessation of hostilities agreement – designedby Russia and Turkey, after two months of secret talks in Ankara with the

main rebel factions – is a very significant development that may help end the war in Syria. It reflects a new stage in the conflict, where the external allies of the warring parties have decided to impose a political solution that reflects the front-line realities. It also reflects a paradigm shift in the geopolitics of the Middle East, where the newly minted Russia-Turkey-Iran axis replaces the U.S. as the indispensable power broker. The cessation of hostilities agreement also includes a commitment from the regime and the rebels to meet in January in Astana, Kazakhstan for talks on the political settlement. Govlokin further commented in the same article that Russia, Turkey, and Iran, as co-sponsors of these talks, are essentially hijacking the peace process from the UN and the Syria International Contact Group that includes the U.S. (as a co-chair with Russia), the EU, Saudi Arabia, and Qatar. Russia and Iran view the new format as more effective, since it excludes the powerful opposition backers that insisted on Assad's immediate ouster. It is still likely that the talks will seek a solution based on the principles of the UN Geneva process and the political targets and time-frames for the transition enshrined in the Geneva Communique and UN Security Council Resolution 2254, which is the call for a transition of power from Assad to a new governing authority that would adopt a new constitution and hold democratic elections.

According to the July 2017 Aljazeera Middle-East news, the agreement - signed by the government brokers - Iran and Russia in May 2017, and rebel- ally Turkey in the Kazakh capital, Astana is the plan calls for the stoppage of hostilities between the rebel groups and forces fighting on behalf of Assad'sregime in the form of four so-called 'de-escalation zones' in mainly opposition-held areas of the country, with Russia, Turkey and Iran to act as the guarantors.

The agreement covers four key areas:

Zone 1: Idlib province and northeastern parts of Latakia province, western areas of Aleppo province and northern areas of Hama province. There are more than one million civilians in this zone and its rebel factions are dominated by an al-Qaeda-linked alliance.

Zone 2: The Rastan and Talbiseh enclave in northern Homs province. There are approximately 180,000 civilians in this zone and its network of rebel groups includes al-Qaeda-linked fighters.

Zone 3: Eastern Ghouta in the northern Damascus countryside. Controlled by Jaish al-Islam, a powerful rebel faction that was participating in the Astana talks, it is home to about 690,000 civilians. This zone does not include the adjacent, government-besieged area of Qaboun.

Zone 4: The rebel-controlled south along the border with Jordan that includes parts of Deraa and Quneitra provinces. Up to 800,000 civilians live there.
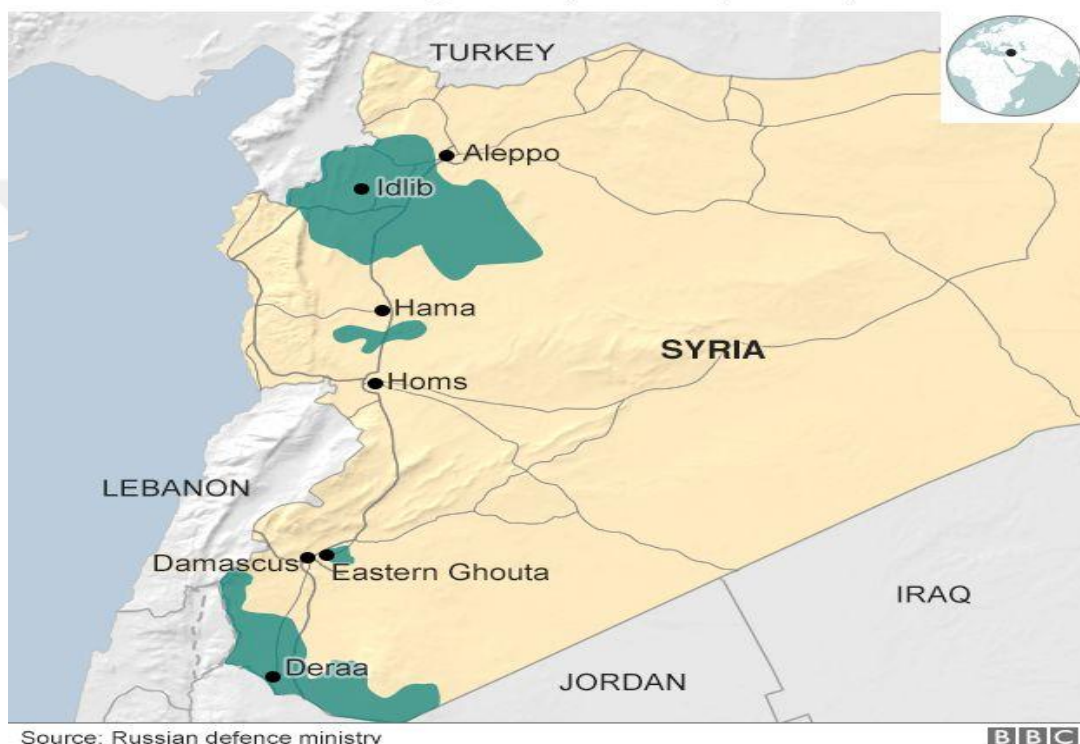
Map 4.1 - De-escalation Zones in Syria

In an article written for TRT World indicates that the deal determining four de-escalation zones brokered by Russia, Iran and Turkey to reduce violence in Syria was agreed. But in one of those areas, Idlib, the agreement could not be implemented. As to the three de-escalation zones, although the deal was brokered by Russia, Turkey and Iran, other countries, including Egypt, the US and Jordan contributed to its implementation. (Bilge N. Kotan, what held up the Idlib de-escalation zone, TRT World, September 2017).

Why is the de-escalation zone in Idlib being formed so late? According to Hurriyet Daily News:

First, Idlib is the largest area under the dominant control of the Syrian opposition. Civilian population, including those who have been able to find refuge there after the catastrophic battle lived in Aleppo last year, sum up to 3.7 million people.

Second, the opposition forces which control the region are not homogeneous. They have differences of opinion among themselves. For example, the Free Syrian Army (FSA), a group supported by Turkey, has lost its strength in the region. Hay'at Tahrir al-Sham (HTS) appears to be a coalition of various opposition forces, including former Al-Nusra, with its roots going back to al-Qaeda. HTS claims to be the legitimate opposition to the Bashar al-Assad regime, but does not necessarily represent the entire Syrian people. Idlib is a very complicated and complex zone where a number of different armed groups are at odds with one another. Implementation of de-escalation there, therefore, is the hardest and the most delicate.

Finally, Turkey should be aware of the political and military objectives, and the limitations, of its mission to take part in the formation of a de-escalation zone under its international responsibilities. Failing to do so and to have a wider and national interpretation of this mission will only pour fuel on fire (Cevikoz, 2017).

An interesting analysis made by Ola Rifai for the Centre for Syrian Studies at the University of St. Andrews as she wrote that the de-escalation zones deal emphasizes that Moscow, the original sponsor of the deal as a supreme power in the Syrian events while marginalizing UN resolutions and efforts by the so-called friends of Syria group – who, in fact, did nothing to reduce the suffering of their friend. For Turkey, the deal is a good opportunity to keep an eye on its southern border and to enhance its role as a Sunni champion (while Gulf States are busy with their internal struggle for power). On the other hand, the establishment of these four de-escalation zones according to her would only empower the lords of war (who are predominantly jihadists) as it yields them official influence zones to control with ideology and guns.

One critical step for the de-escalation zones is instituting of a no-fly zones which according to her is supported by the International Community rather than influence zones brokered by actors who are engaged in the war: the withdrawal of sectarian militias, empowering the political opposition rather than dividing the already divided and fractured opposition between Geneva, Astana, Riyadh and Cairo Resolutions. For Rifai, these steps sound impossible, as the West has lost interest in Syria. The new administrations in the U.S and France are shifting the focus to local issues whereby Gulf States are embarking on an intra-struggle for power. Whilst Turkey, paranoid of Kurds, seems ready to negotiate stances with the regime (Rifai, 2017:1).

With the more than 10,000 fighters associated with al-Qaeda in Idlib, Rifai continues to say the de-escalation zone can be a golden opportunity for them to further increase in numbers while the U.S missiles won't be able to eliminate their

cross-border ideology, and as a result, the fragile political opposition and the secular youth who were the backbone of the 2011 Revolution are being marginalized furthermore. Rifai believes that the de-escalation zones will only allow war lords to prevail over the political opposition and they were designed to serve the interests of regional powers rather than that of Syrians. Although for now the agreement has yielded a relative calmness, it would make Syria pulse with death and jihadists for years to come (Rifai, 2017:1).

However, a different point of view was posted in Daily Sabah Politics, published in October 2012 which stated that the people in Idlib are hopeful that with the involvement of the Turkish Armed Forces (TSK), the city and its people will be able to live in more peaceful conditions. With the first convoy of Turkish forces entered Idlib on October 8 in order to assess the situation on the ground and establish a de-escalation zone agreed to by Turkey, Russia, and Iran while preventing a possible "terror corridor", interviews made and compiled by the Anadolu International News Agency to a number of local citizens expressed hopes for the city's future saying that the conflicts will finally come to an end because of the TSK presence, as saying:

> *Muhammed Abbas, a manager at a local hospital, said they welcome Turkey's military presence in the city and expect the conflict to die down soon.*
> *In a similar vein, AğitReşit, 18, predicted the latest development will bring an end to the city's security problems as well as regime attacks.*
> *"The Turkish army will change the situation in Idlib. Our lives will go back to normal," CemilDerviş, 48, said.*
> *Muhammed Mustafa, 22, said that they were expecting schools and colleges in the city to re-open soon. He said the local councils will also do their part with the arrival of Turkish forces and that it would also mitigate the refugee issue to a certain level as people begin to return to the city.*

Meanwhile, Syrians from Idlib who took shelter in Reyhanlı, Hatay, are also following the Idlib operations closely as they hope to return to their hometown as soon as possible, the Anadolu News Agency said.

CHAPTER FIVE

HOW TO MEASURE EFFECTIVENESS OF LOCAL GOVERNANCE

Under what conditions the local governance in a conflict area like Idlib proved to be effective? Will there be ways and means to measure effectiveness and efficiencies despite of the limitations outlined in Chapter Three. This question will be unravelled in this chapter by presenting the main results of the analyses and assessment of some 20 cases (Table 5.1) from selected local councils in Idlib. These reports are examined to see if really there are any relations between the indicators for a good governance as identified by (Brinkerhoff, 2008:5-6)–security governance, administrative-economic governance, and political governace. Similarly, this chapter also examined the factors that hinder their well-functioning as local government as have chosen by the people, for the people.

To begin with, two important factors in relation to the governance are explored: Definition of "Effectiveness" within the premise of the functioning of the local councils, and how to measure effective governance:

5.1. DEFINITION OF EFFECTIVENESS WITHIN THE PREMISE OF GOVERNANCE

In order to get a sense of how effective or ineffective a local government functions, first, it maybe sensible to understand the concept of what "governance" is in a universal term, then link it to the governance in the time of conflict like the ones in the areas of Idlib.

Research indicates that there seems to be no consensus among the scholars and policymakers as to a single definition of governance. (Kaufmann et al, 2010:4) defined governance as "*the traditions and institutions by which authority in a country is exercised*". From this definition, three areas were identified as the key

indicators of good governance: (1) The process by which government are selected, monitored and replaced that includes voice and accountability and political stability and absence of violence or terrorism, (2) the capacity of the government to effectively formulate and implement sound policies includes effectiveness in public services and regulatory quality, and (3) the respect of citizens and the statefor institutions that govern economic and social interactions among them, like the rule of law and control of corruptions are among the essential factors under this area.

In his article written for the Macrothink Institute, (Keser, 2017:29) has presented three essential elements of a good governance, *"governance is a process whereby societies or organizations make their important decisions, determine whom they involve in the process and how they render account"*. In addition, (Keser, 2017:27) presented an extract from the UNDP report of 1997 and quoted as saying, *"Better governance is vital not just to ensure the rule oflaw and protect against international organized crime, but also to maintain and expand social and economic infrastructure"*. Therefore, a good governance is essential for a successful development.

In light of the on going conflict in Syria, (Peclard and Mechaulan, 2015:9) argues that civil wars need to be seen as part and parcel of historical processes of state formation and not, as the expression of state's inability to maintain their monopoly over the use of violence, or as the result of their structural weaknesses, their collapse and degenerating states. From the beginning of the Syrian conflict, political as well as administrative orders have been in placed by rebel movements called the local councils that are selected and supported by the grassroots. These local councils strive to seek legitimacy on their very existence to the extent to which they may be able to institutionalize their presence a substitute of the collapsing regime and transform into political domination.

But what is meant to be called "rebel governance"in light of the Syrian conflict? An interesting write up made by (Kasfir, 2008: 4) that suits the formation of the rebel-held governance in Idlib. It is defined as groups whose members are engaged in protracted violence with the intention of gaining undisputed political control over all or a portion of a pre-existing state's territory. He added that the term governance is the range of possibilities for organization, authority andresponsiveness created between guerrillas and civilians.(Mampilly, 2011: 4) adds a 'governance

system' refers not only the structures that provide certain public goods but also the practices of ruleinsurgents adopt.

5.2. MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS OF THE LOCAL COUNCILS IN IDLIB

Method

A qualitative content analysis was carried out on the 20 selected sampled cases/ reports from the 15 local councils in Idlib for the period 2011 to 2014. These reports were gathered and selected from the reports prepared by an international donor working closely in those local councils listed in Table 5.1. Qualitative content analysis is widely used research as a "flexible method for analyzing text data". It encompasses a wide variety of "family of analytic approaches ranging from impressionistic, intuitive, interpretive analyses to systematic, strict textual analyses (Hsieh and Shannon, 2005: 1277), as a research method for the subjective interpretation of the content of text data through the systematic classification process of coding and identifying themes or patterns.

Sampling

Following the above definition, the use of direct content analysis is applied: a trial coding was carried out on the 20 selected reports using an initial code book (code table) of major themes (variables), with a final codebook developed during the entire coding process. The codes were then examined for underlying themes where a brief analysis of frequently occurring words was also conducted and tabulated.

Table 5.1 - List of the Fifteen Local Councils in Idlib (2011-2014)

Local Councils in Idlib
1.   Atma
2.   Darkosh
3.   Eskat
4.   Jarjanaz
5.   Habeet
6.   Kafr Aruq
7.   Kafrdaryan
8.   Kafr Nabl
9.   Ma'arrat al-Numan
10. Harambosh
11. Maar Tamsarin
12. Salqin
13. Saraqib
14. Sarmada
15. Maarrat Tamsarin

With the formulated main research question of this study whether the Local Councils in the province of Idlib are effective and efficient enough for local governance by fulfilling the governance functions and answering needs of local communities, the first step I followed is to develop major categories of themes and a coding scheme as three main functions for a good governance as delineated by Brinkerhoff in Chapter 3.3 as shown in table 5.2 that includes a selected set of texts (column 4) to test the hypothesis as well as a set of codes (themes, variables) as derived from the research question (column 2).

Table 5.2 – Initial Code Table

Category	Theme	Definition	Description	Example	Color Code
Function:	1. Security governance	1. Provide security by use of the instruments of the state, including ultimately its monopoly on force to maintain border integrity and to uphold the laws and norms of the society.	1. Any sentence, statement or word that refers to provide security, force, border, sheling, rehabilitation, protection of people or property, coerscion, abuse, legitimacy, crime, illegal activity, etc...	1. Implementat on of the project was delayed due to the heavy shelling of the area.	Security – yellow
	2. Administrative-economic governance	2. Provide effective and efficient services delivery at the level of quality and quantity that are generally agreed upon by at least a majority of citizens as a state responsibility.	2. Any sentence, statement or word to provide service, economic, efficiency, accountability, provision, needs, implementation. 3. Any sentence, statement or word to provide legitimacy, visibility, opportunities, inequities, civil society, recognition, socioeconomic and/or ethnic groups, information, transparency and anti-corruption measures, rule of law, and periodic and formal contestation for power (elections).	2. Support civil society organizations that link emerging civilian authorities to communities through the provision of tangible services.	Admin-econ. –blue
	3. Political governance	3. Generate and sustain legitimacy through separation of powers, responsive and accountable government, representation and inclusiveness, and protection of basic rights for all citizens.		3. To increase visibility and recognition as an effective governance.	Political – pink
Efficiency	Yes No	Has a particular function served its purpose?			Yes – green No – orange

Unit of Analysis

Themes, coulumn 2 under table 5.2, were used as the basic unit of analysis in this study or the basic unit of text that will be classified and categorized. Theme is defined as "a pattern in the information that at minimum describes and organizes the possible observations and at maximum interprets aspects of the phenomenon" (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 20016: 4). In other words, themes can be expressed in a number of physical linguistic units, be it a single word, a sentence, or a paragraph, and a code was therefore assigned to any section of text that expressed an idea represented in a theme relevant to the study.

Coding Process

Creating and applying a coding scheme is considered it to be of crucial importance amongst the phases of content analysis, as it influences the outcomes of the whole study to the largest extent. After the data are reviewed and exmined and there is a general understanding of the scope and contexts of the key experiences under study, coding provides the researcher with a system to organize the data, uncovering and documenting additional relationships within and between concepts and experiences described in the data. Codes are tags and labelled, which are assigned to whole documents or segments of documents for example paragraphs, sentences, or words to help catalogue key concepts while preserving the context in which these concepts occur (Bradley et al, 2007: 1).

Following the above research method, I gathered several codes that conceptualized the process of assessing and examining the efficient and effective functioning of the local councils in Idlib from its inception in 2011 to 2014. Using the codes and the themes, I identified and developed an initial code table (Table 5.2) to be used as an initial guide while coding the data. As the process of coding continues, this code table changed in order to reflect the new themes or variables that emerged from the text. As a result, a new codes/ themes were identified that either find its place in the existing themes – part of the main category or can stand alone.

The coding process emphasis the development not only descriptive codes but importantly analytic codes that reflect the manner in which the local councils execute their roles and responsibilities and conceptualized their reported experiences and issues rather than simply using codes that describe what has actually happened. The initial code table (Table 5.2) consisted of mostly descriptive codes as an initial

guide to the coding process. These codes were arrange hierarchically representing the relationship between the major codes and the sub codes.

The initial code table (Table 5.2) is used as a preliminary codebook for the 20 selected reports. This initial coding process allowed me to assess and analyzed whether or not the codes developed suits the data and to make any necessary amendments before coding the rest of the data. The codes I developed were assigned to a major theme or category with respective color e.g. security governance – yellow, administrative-economic governance – blue and political governance – pink. Both the major theme and color reflect their relationship to other codes and wider related themes.

New Codes Emerged During Initial Coding

"job opportunities"	"scarcity of funds"
"delays"	"transparency"
"changes in local council's membership"	"safety"
"significant issues within the local councils"	"failed to deliver"
"suspension of activities"	"border crossing"
"legal status"	"challenges faced"
"women participation"	
"social media"	
"lack of experience and capacity"	
"coordination"	
"communication"	
"technical problems"	
"stolen/ missing items"	

Final Coding

Given the natüre and limitation of this study, the 'Human coders'has been applied although prone to subjectivity, fatigue and changes of understanding of the codes over time, the use of other coding method is not feasible. The initial coding process took place over the course of three days, following with further reviews of another couple of days. The final coding that is based from the 20 selected reports was more tedious that took for about a week with constant reference to the initial code table that had previously been assigned the same code, reflect the same concept or need to be assigned as a new code.

During the final coding stage, number of new words, phrases and sentences were coded and therefore the code table needs to be expanded and adjusted as well as re-structured in order to reflect the themes and topics that actually and naturally emerged from the sample reports or data of the local councils on the ground. It is important to stay focused in looking at the assumptions, norms and values behind those reports, guided by the following questions:

What is going on with the local councils?

What are the local councils doing?

What are the locals saying about the functioning of the local councils?

How do the actions of the local councils affect the life of the locals?

How to support, maintain, impede or change these actions of the local councils?

The final code table (Table 5.3) shows the complete list of codes as well as the new structure applicable to the sampled 20 reviews. From the codes described in the initial code table (Table 5.2) developed during the trial coding, a furthermore codes and themes were added during the final coding process. The codes vary from descriptive, thematic and some are mainly organizational codes that lead me to develop a more meaningful code that describe the functioning of the local councils.

As a final process, each code and the related segments of the text were reviewed to make sure of coding consistency.   It is in this final stage that broader themes were reviewed resulting in combining some themes and making connections between others. I have also included some more descriptive summaries of the issues raised up in the reports and the manner in which they were raised to give more light on the themes. The final code table is shown in Table 5.3 with numbering of the codes labelled as "CN" (Code Number).

Table 5.3 – Final Code Table

CN	Code (Theme & Sub-Theme)	Description	Use/Examples
1.0	Security governance	Provide security by coordinating with the armed-groups or militias that supports the vision of the local councils as a local governance.	To protect the local councils from the possible invasion of extremists groups or from the regime attacks.
1.1	Responsive and pro-active	Ability of the councils to response to crises.	Hijacked transporting trucks of goods by an armed group,
1.2	Monitoring security measures	Find alternatives to document loading of goods and commodities in warehouse to avoid security challenges.	Systematic ways to monitor and document delivery of goods from the point of origin to the warehouse.
1.3	Suspecions and allegations	Challenges being faced by the councils to some members.	Forging receipts for some delivery of goods.
2.0	Administrative-Economic Governance	To function as an effective and efficient service provider for the people.	Plan, organize and implement the efficient delivery of goods and services to the needy people in the community.
2.1	Local Councils as facilitators	LC's facilatate efforts in providing services for the people.	LC's received waste management equipment and other related materials and facilatate its distribution and implementation.
2.2	Purchase and transport	To build LC's capacity to manage procurement and transporting of commodities.	LC's buy local wheat for the production of bread.
2.3	Provide job opportunities	To create community actvities with the goal of providing jobs to the locals.	Increasing capacity of bread production and distributions also needs more people to implement it.
2.4	Skills and capacities	Refers to the council members' ability and strategy to implement the various activities successfully.	Local Council faced problems in managing heavy equipments due to lack of experience and specilialized individuals.
3.0	Political Governance	To increase the visibility and recognition of the Local Councils as an alternative for the ungoverned areas.	The LC's prioritizes the needs of the people and therefore the perception of the people is that the LC's could be the best choce of the people.
3.1	Stable positive perception	Responsible in maintaining and providing services despite of the insufficiency and scarcity.	Waste management projects sustained as a result of the security measures in place by ensuring the safe delivery of the equipment.
3.2	Intermediary	LC's build links with the other LC's and organizations.	LC's to coordinate with other LC's to identify the common needs of the community.

Table 5.3. Continue

3.3	Building strong relations	LC's learn to build relations with other LC's, local entities and relief donors.	LC's working with the Provincial Councils and civil service organizations thus increasing their visbility and recognition.
3.4	Popular support from people	People's support in the community is getting stronger.	The popular support of the locals to the LCs is getting building up according to the survey condecued by an independent body.
3.5	Election process	Locals are startting to understand the importance of democratic election as a powerful means in selecting the leaders of the community.	The entire LC members resigned due to some issues and the locals proceeded in electing new members though took a while.
3.6	Legal status	Refers to the membership of the councils and how they are being accepted by the local entities as well as the various donors locally and internationally.	Some members of the councils are defected armies, from militia group or former mafias.
4.0	Communication and Information	Means of easy dissemination of information to the wider public as well as ways and means to each out the majority of the local population.	An avenue for the public to know the local councils' activities and various events in the community.
4.1	Social Media	The best machine in reaching out locals and international individuals, groups, donors.	using Facebook, twitter, emails, and other social media coverage.
5.0	Women Empowerment	To build capacities for women in the community.	Training and educating women in various fields to alleviate their status in the community.
5.1	Income-generating project	Establish workshops with the goal to help women to establish income-generating small businesses.	Sewing equipment delivered and workshops was immediately conducted.
5.2	Vocational opportunities	An activity/workshop designed for both men and women.	Uncommon activity where men and women are involved side-by-side.

CHAPTER SIX

METHODOLOGY: A QUALITATIVE METHOD

The aim of this section is to express the methods that are deployed for this thesis together with the reasons "why" they are the most appropriate ones given the limitations of this thesis as detailed in Chapter 1.3. The purpose for selecting qualitative and not quantitative research has to do with the fact that quantitative research generally focuses on multiple cases and only allows measurements on the surface, concerning more numerical questions. This research is more interested in words than numbers. Considering the nature of this study, qualitative research is more suitable to practice answeringthe research questions.

6.1. STRUCTURAL – FUNCTIONAL THEORY

Structural functional theory describes a social system with structures and functions. Theory mainly focuses on functional needs and corresponding structures for satisfying these needs fort the survival of a social system. Thus functional needs and societal structures to meet these needs plays important role in the sociological analysis of structural functional theory.

Ruth A. Wallace (1995: 16) at this point defines the theory as;

> *"This perspective is often labeled "structural-functionalism" because of its focus on the functional requisites, "needs," of a social system that must be met if the system is to survive and on the corresponding structures that meet these "needs." With this view, social systems have a tendency to perform certain tasks that are necessary for their survival, and sociological analysis, therefore, involves a search for the social structures that perform these tasks or meet the "needs" of the social system."*

Structural Functional perspective "*conceptualizes society as a system of interacting parts that promote stability or transformation through their*

interactions."(Chillcott, J.H. 1998: 103-111). System, from this perspective, exists with structures and functions, which are both necessary for the survival of the system.

Structural – Functional theory attempts to understand social systems in terms of its structures and functionality of those structures within the System. Structures refers to institutional, organized parts of system which are interrelated and interdependent but also autonomous. On the other hand function is defined by Radcliffe-Brown as '*a particular social usage is the contribution it makes to the total social life as the functioning of the total social system'* (Radcliffe-Brown, 1952:181) Thus function can be understood as process within the structure.

Anotherinteresting argument of an efficient governance development that supports the structural-functionaltheory, affirms that each government institutionsuch aspolice, prisons, hospitals, schools, waste management, and water/electricity services - has its own function; the organizations "work together to promote social stability.(O'Halloran, 2005: 48). Moreover, strengthening institutions inherently leads to a unified system of functional parts which constitutes a dynamic equilibrium.

6.1.1. Applying Structural Functional Theory to Local Councils

Structural and functional components of governance, therefore, closely related with the Local Administrative Councils' ability to meet with the needs of the social system within the liberated areas of Syria. Effective functioning of Local Councils thus can be understood from its contribution to the functioning of the total system in the liberated areas. When applied structural functional theory in political science, they identified seven functions in the political structures; within two broad categories. Accordingly input functions are defined as *Political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication.* Output functions are identified as *Rule making, Rule adjudication and Rule application* (Almond and Coleman, 1960: 16-17).

Local administrative councils are identified as one of the structure in the system within the Idlib. Analyzing the systematic functionality of Local Councils in terms of its functional ability to effectively correspond to the political needs is one of the main aim of this thesis. Application ofStructural Functional theory is important to eloborate the link between local administrtaive councils and expected fucntions of

them with the exsiting polical system in liberated areas of Syria. Applying this theory to his research on governance reconstruction (Kalu, 2011:77). The priority immediately following a collapse should be rebuilding institutional capacity and legitimacy through delivering services (Kalu, 2011, 77: 120-37). His research proves that efficiency and accountability are built through the delivery of public services, such as reconstruction projects, medical supplies, schools, hospitals, and water services.

6.2. THE DEDUCTIVE THEORY

This research starts from a general perspective of the topic, i.e. from a general reasoning and continues with a more specific one. Thus, the "deductive theory" is used in this thesis as one of the main methodologies. (Blaikie, 2000:70) defines the deductive theory as a science to discover uniformities, to find universal statements which correspond to the facts of nature or more correctly for descriptions of observed states of affairs.

With the help of the "deductive theory", the aim is to understand emergence of conflict in Syria by revisiting causes and effects of revolutions within the numerous regions of Middle East to make the research more specific by discussing effects of different dimensions of Arab Spring on the conflict in Syria.

6.3. THE ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

The related Archives have also been investigated. This method has been chosen as it is necessary to find out the origins of the conflict and this can only be done by an archival research. A link between the past is necessary as it is often difficult to resolve the conflicts if what had happened in the past is not clear. At the same time, the history of the conflicts during the Arab Spring can easily be discussed and compared with the Syria case with the help of the Archival Research Method.

Archives cover a wide range of materials which could be the articles, letters, newspapers or reports. They are the originals, i.e. they are the primary rather than secondary sources. Archival research is the research of the written documents. In this dissertation, there is a part which examines the Arab Spring and specifically Syrian

Conflict. The analysis of some written sources such as books and articles published in the past are crucial for that literature.

(Ventresca and Mohr, 2001:3-4) Archives in addition composed the collections of organizational life that is stretching across time and space. Being available for all to come and see, as presented with examples highlighted in this study, archival studies provide the chance to do things in many ways, to tell new stories and to make their own path. Such is the energies of insight evident in the present-day archival work.

6.4. THE CONTENT ANALYSIS

The last technique used in this thesis is the "Content Analysis", which is also called the "Textual Analysis". It is the most common methodology used in social sciences. It can be used for both quantitative and qualitative analysis; in any kind of analysis where communication content is classified and categorized. Communication content simply includes the written text, speech and the interviews.

For this study, the qualitative content analysis will be used. Qualitative content analysis focuses on the intentional meaning of the content. It is an approach of empirical, methodological and controlled analysis of texts within their context of communication, which follows analytical rules and step by step models without rash quantification. Krippendorffstates that the "content analysis" is a research technique for making replicable and valid inferences from data to their context. As a research technique, content analysis involves specialized procedures for processing scientific data. Like all research techniques, its aim is to enable knowledge, new insights, representation of "facts" and a practical guide to action (Krippendorff, 1980:45). Thus, it is a useful method for this thesis as it helps to analyze the written texts related to the topics such as the literature of the conflict areas in Middle East, the SyrianConflict and the Local Councils. Reading those references, learning to analyze the articles and newspapers are an important part of this research.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

This study discusses the effectiveness of Local Administrate Councils, established in the rebelled-held Idlib province of Syria by focusing functions of Local Administrative Councils and discussing obstacles before their well-functioning.

When the idea of Local Administrative Councils first emerged with their *socially flexible structure*, a form of civil society organizations and as a bridge between revolution and daily lives, it has been expected that these structures would assume the administrative role to support people to manage their daily live independently, a democratic role as a platform to let people to express their will and a place to initiate social revolution at local level. Therefore Local Administrative Councils were the main governance mechanism for the revolutionary opposition forces as local level. There is no doubt that, effective management of daily lives in the liberated territories of Syria, would mean legitimacy for the opposition forces (Aziz, 2013: 1).

In so far, key definition of Local Administrative Councils provided by Omer (Aziz, 2013: 1), has not been clearly defines from the existing councils. From the outset, their *ad hoc* structures are far from broader representation, resulted competing Local Administrative Councils rather than harmony and coordination. Therefore, their one of the leading role as a mechanism for social mobilization is threatened. Challenging relations with other actors such as Armed Fractions, Local Inhabitants and Local and International non-governmental organizations in the constantly changing politically instable territories of liberated areas further limits the administrative functions of Local Councils. Furthermore, lack of resources in Syria, both in terms of human resources and in terms of providing public service functions,

further limits the well-functioning of Local Administrative Councils by limiting their independence rather putting them into a dependent position to the International Donors in terms of receiving humanitarian aid for the realization of basic public service needs.

Within these circumstances, when effectiveness of Local Administrative Councils is assessed on the basis of three sub-systems; security governance, economic and administrative governance and political governance, the challenges before the Local Administrative Councils are still too high (Brinkerhoff, 2008:5-6):

1) Security Governance, although it has never been their first and utmost function as a civilian initiative, truly creation of a secure environment is essential for the legitimate governance and well-functioning administration. Local Administrative Councils, as an enforcement mechanism has little to do within the unsecure and uncertain environment inside Syria. This is essential reason why their independence toward the different armed fractions is not easy task for governing security in the region.

2) When it comes to economic and administrative governance, although analysis reveals that most of the local councils functions as administrators and public servants, due to explicit scarcity in resources both in terms of human capital, funds and natural resources, once again it is difficult to think Local Administrative Councils as independent structures from fund providers, national and international non-governmental organizations and their donors.

3) Political governance, in the absence of strong central government supporting Local Councils and with the described structural and functional deficits due to lack of enough resources and security challenges, cannot be managed as it is expected, a way for social mobilization and legitimacy.

As mentioned in the methodology part, structural functional theory used in this study in terms of understanding Local Councils' from structural-functional point view in assessing their effectiveness. Effectiveness in that sense, can be understood as Local Councils' functionality in satisfying local needs as a structure.

When functions of political systems recalled as *Political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation, interest aggregation, political communication, rulemaking, rule adjudication and rule application*, effectiveness of Local Administrative Councils in terms of effectively performing these functions is relatively difficult within the given limitation of this research. However, as discussed

within the respective parts of study, Local Administrative Councils are formed in way to effectively support and partially govern above mentioned functions. In terms of realization of input functions; political socialization and recruitment, interest articulation and aggregation and political communication, there is no doubt, within the conditions of civil war, formation of Local Administrative Councils firstly aimed to serve as the main structures to effectively manage these functions for the stability of the revolution.

However, within the given limitations and constrains of civil war, unpredictability, dependence of Local Councils to the other stakeholders, reduced their ability to serve as the main structure for the realization of these input functions. Although competing local administrative councils, somehow served as an institution for political socialization and recruitment, absence effective election mechanism and failures to represent whole communities of society, clearly effects the legitimacy and reliability of these institutions to become a point for political socialization and recruitment. When Interest articulation and aggregation is discussed, like a non-governmental agency, Local Councils might be point for articulating interests in the given limited territories and quite small society. Aggregation of interest function of Local Councils, on the other hand, is also limited in the policy-making processes of articulated interests within given chaos and unsecure environment as well as relatively narrow window of independence of the Local Councils: *all the functions performed in the political system are performed by political communication.* Although Local Councils can be regarded as an institution for political communication, performance of Local Administrative Councils as a means of political communication is doubtful within the continuing civil war conditions by the given limitations in realization of other functions.

In assessing output functions, more truly governmental functions; *rule making, rule adjudication and rule application, Local Councils clearly faces similar challenges.* Lack of central government and in the absence of unique decision-making mechanism, with the givenflaws in independence and legitimacy of Local Councils, performing these functions is limited with the serious civil war conditions in the liberated areas of Syria.

Based from the above analysis, the path of the local councils has never been straight. Even after more than six years of conflict that has caused national tearing down, local councils — as emerging directly from the grassroots —remain in the

stage of complexity in its attempt to establish an alternative democratic governance apart from the traditional authoritarian or totalitarian practices of both the regime and extremist groups. As of today, the two main strongholds of the opposition, Aleppo and Idlib, local councils chiefly draw their legitimacy from the delivery of services that they can provide to the suffering local communities and the quality of the daily interaction with the locals. Nevertheless, these councils have gradually been weakened, firstly by the systematic destruction policies adopted and implemented by the regime and its allies (which have to some extent achieved their main goal, that no **state-like** actors or governance structures should arise in the liberated territories) and then by the ISIL. At a second level, they have also suffered from the absence of a long-term coordinated donor strategy, from the internal political rivalry between opposition groups, and even from their ambivalent collaborative or competitive relations with armed groups. Their gradual marginalization, worsen by a dominant understanding of Syria focused only on war, whether civil war or by proxy – by radicalization and extremism. Furthermore, the marginalization of local civil actors today presents a major risk for the future of Syria, specifically within the context of the two major aspects of the Syrian question as seen at this stage by the international community**:** the endeavor to find a political solution and the struggle against ISIL.

On the one hand, sidelining these groups from the debates and negotiations that aim to define the framework of a political solution for the Syria of tomorrow could eventually undermine the foundations of a potential acceptable and lasting solution by and for all Syrians, especially because any potential agreement on a political transition will, in the end, be applied by the local actors present on the ground, and particularly if the regime is forced to make some concessions in favor of a decentralized system. On the other hand, the struggle against ISIL, which cannot only be strictly approached from a military angle, again poses the question that has already been addressed since 2014: who are the actors that can replace terrorist organizations wherever and whenever they lose control over certain territories?

Moreover, with the number of rounds of peace talks on Syria, including the recent Astana meeting brokered by the tripartite operational group – Russia, Iran and Turkey with the hope to implement ceasefire and potential paving the way for political settlement, has given rise for many questions whether this initiative will gain success or will only create more opportunities of distrust and accusations that would only lead to more divisions; Turkey who supports the opposition and the

removal of Assad while Russia and Iran maintain their stands to keep Assad in power,while the United Nations, the United States and Jordan have at different times sent observers to the Astana talks, but have run concurrently with the UN-brokered, more politically-geared Geneva peace talks.

On the other hand, the delegation from the Syrian opposition to the discussion have and will only one aim to reach a political solution to the conflict that will bring about the removal of Assad during the transition period, while the Syrian coalition based in Qatar continues to refuse the talks and remained independent to the Russian-back hostility. The rebel oppositon group is accusing Russia and Iran of violating their own agreements by continuing the shelling and bombing the areas that were designated as the de-escalating zones (even up to when this study is written). As a result, the efforts of the Astana talks remain uncertain whether there would be any international monitoring of the de-escalation zones, such as an international peace keeper as an outcome of the talks. Some critics have described the de-escalation plan as the de-facto partitioning of Syria. If some of the rebel groups continue to be stubborn and fight, this could lead to the division of Syria that will result to the break-up of the country.

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VITAE

Arnold Veniegas Laroya is a Filipino citizen, who was born in the town of Binalonan, province of Pangasinan in the Philippines on September 19, 1968. He completed his elementary and secondary school at Balangobong-San Pablo Elementary School in 1980 and studied high school at BATASAN National High School in Binalonanand graduated in 1985. He began his university at the University of Baguio in the province of Benguet in the Philippines in 1985 and took up Computer Engineering. In 1986, he moved to another university – Polytechnic University of the Philippines in the province of Bataan and shifted to Accountancy which he completed in 1990 with the degree of Bachelor in Accountacy.

ÖZGEÇMİŞ

Arnold Veniegas Laroya, 19 Eylül 1968'de Filipinler'de Pangasinan eyaletinin Binalonan şehrinde doğmuştur. İlk ve ortaokulu Balangobong-San Pablo İlköğretim Okulunda okuyarak 1980 yılında mezun oldu. BATASAN Ulusal Lisesi'nden ise 1985 yılında mezun oldu. Aynı yıl, Filipinler Baguio Üniversitesi'nde Bilgisayar Mühendisliği bölümünde okurken, 1986'da Bataan eyaletindeki Filipinler Politeknik Üniversitesi Muhasebe Programına kabul edildi. 1990 yılında Muhasebe Lisans derecesi ile mezun oldu.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1: The Proposed Interview Protocol Sample

Questionnaire

The Local Administrative Councils in Idlib

Interview Protocol Sample

A. Effectiveness:

- **With more than six years since the establishment of the Local Councils, what are the experiences learned in terms of administrative and operational functions:**

✓ Fund management

✓ Providing basic services

✓ Justice courts

✓ Efficient communication

- **How do you describe the efforts of the local councils in following:**

✓ Democratic procedures e.g. election processes

✓ Creating effective organizations

✓ Delineating decision-making procedures?

- **How would the local councils systematize their work and plans despite of the difficult situation?**

- **Considering the historical Syrian context, how do you measure the level of transparency within the council?**

- **What is the level of relationship between the military groups and the local councils? In your opinion, does it affect or influence the decisions of the councils? In what way.**

- **Do you think corruption and inefficiency a big problem of the current regime? What measures in place by the councils in their staff and administrators?**

- **How is the participation and presence of women viewed by the councils?**

B. The local council goals:

- **What do you think are the main goals of the local councils?**

- **In your opinion, can the local councils become the nucleus of future municipalities in a transitional government and ultimately assist in the formation of an elected government. What is your view on this? Do you think this is achievable?**

- **In the distribution of aid and services whether from individuals, groups or nation, what measures do the councils apply in order to achieve justice and transparency?**

- **What is the role of media in the functioning of the councils?**

C. Civil Authority and legitimacy:

- **Do you think the local councils are legitimate to the eyes of the locals? How often is election done?**

- **What are the factors that hamper the ability of the councils to be recognized as centers of civil control and local authority?**

- **Do you have any data on how local councils are viewed by those supporters of the opposition living abroad? Do you have regular contact with them?**

D. Relationship with civil organizations:

- **Are you aware of any contact with civil society groups/NGO's, etc…? If so, can you mention which organizations or groups?**

- **Do you think these organization play an important role in the development of the councils? In what ways?**

- **In what ways do councils enhance the relationship with the civil society groups?**

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix 2: Questionnaire Respondent 1

The Local Administrative Councils in Idlib
Interview Protocol Sample – Respondent 1

E. Effectiveness:

- **With more than six years since the establishment of the Local Councils, what are the experiences learned in terms of administrative and operational functions:**
- ✓ **Fund management**
- ✓ **Providing basic services**
- ✓ **Justice courts**
- ✓ **Efficient communication**

The local councils were able to attract the big donors and support of the international entities as it's moderate body helping the Syrians. They were very successful in providing services and manage as governance body in the community.

- **How do you describe the efforts of the local councils in following:**
- ✓ **Democratic procedures e.g. election processes**
- ✓ **Creating effective organizations**
- ✓ **Delineating decision-making procedures?**

Very good, they were able to conduct elections and people perceived them as independent and transparency process.

- **How would the local councils systematize their work and plans despite of the difficult situation?**

Trying to work closely with the community and at the same time bring experienced people who knows how to manage such civilian entity.

- **Considering the historical Syrian context, how do you measure the level of transparency within the council?**
Very good

- **What is the level of relationship between the military groups and the local councils? In your opinion, does it affect or influence the decisions of the councils? In what way.**

No, there is no relationship unless in some areas where there is a presence of radical groups which prevent the LCs in doing their work.

- **Do you think corruption and inefficiency a big problem of the current regime? What measures in place by the councils in their staff and administrators?**

Regime is corrupted, however, The LC is trying and in collaboration with the community people to be accountable towards what they do for the community.

- **How is the participation and presence of women viewed by the councils?**

F. The local council goals:

- **What do you think are the main goals of the local councils?**

- **In your opinion, can the local councils become the nucleus of future municipalities in a transitional government and ultimately assist in the formation of an elected government. What is your view on this? Do you think this is achievable?**

- **In the distribution of aid and services whether from individuals, groups or nation, what measures do the councils apply in order to achieve justice and transparency?**

- **What is the role of media in the functioning of the councils?**

G. Civil Authority and legitimacy:

- **Do you think the local councils are legitimate to the eyes of the locals? How often is election done?**

- **What are the factors that hamper the ability of the councils to be recognized as centers of civil control and local authority?**

- **Do you have any data on how local councils are viewed by those supporters of the opposition living abroad? Do you have regular contact with them?**

H. Relationship with civil organizations:

- **Are you aware of any contact with civil society groups/NGO's, etc…? If so, can you mention which organizations or groups?**

- **Do you think these organization play an important role in the development of the councils? In what ways?**

- **In what ways do councils enhance the relationship with the civil society groups?**

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Respondent: 1 (Anonymous)
Company/Group: Syrian individual
Date: February 2, 2018

Appendix 3: Questionnaire Respondent 2

The Local Administrative Councils in Idlib
Interview Protocol sample – Respondent 2

I.   Effectiveness:

•   **With more than six years since the establishment of the Local Councils, what are the experiences learned in terms of administrative and operational functions:**

✓   Fund management

✓   Providing basic services

✓   Justice courts

✓   Efficient communication

•   **How do you describe the efforts of the local councils in following:**

Democratic procedures e.g. election processes: Differing from an area to the other, the selection of the council members might range between open elections, till consensus between the town notables.

✓   Creating effective organizations: Since they have been receiving capacity building trainings from multiple entities, the structure of the LCs has been getting more and more organized.

✓   Delineating decision-making procedures?

•   **How would the local councils systematize their work and plans despite of the difficult situation?**

•   **Considering the historical Syrian context, how do you measure the level of transparency within the council?** As always, the levels of transparency differ from an area to the other. But in general, it's much better than what it was before the establishment of the existing LCs.

•   **What is the level of relationship between the military groups and the local councils? In your opinion, does it affect or influence the decisions of the councils? In what way.**The levels are also different from an area to the other, but usually each council build good relationship with a military actor in the town. This ranges between complete control of the military group over the council, till peer to peer coordination relationship.

- **Do you think corruption and inefficiency a big problem of the current regime? What measures in place by the councils in their staff and administrators?**I would say insufficient level of organizing is the problem.

- **How is the participation and presence of women viewed by the councils?** Women participation is still limited in the councils.

J. The local council goals:

- **What do you think are the main goals of the local councils?**Being the local governing bodies in their areas.

- **In your opinion, can the local councils become the nucleus of future municipalities in a transitional government and ultimately assist in the formation of an elected government. What is your view on this? Do you think this is achievable?**I don't think their mandate is to supposed to be future municipalities, they should be the local governance bodies their in a decentralized regime in Syria, not only a service providing municipality.

- **In the distribution of aid and services whether from individuals, groups or nation, what measures do the councils apply in order to achieve justice and transparency?**Since the councils are not the only entities providing services, the council usually coordinates with other actors like humanitarian organizations to better distribute the assistance in a way that aims to achieve some justice in responding to the community needs. But unfortunately the total volume of provided assistance is not enough to fill all the needs, which always contribute to the presence of unacceptance in the community to the level of provided assistance.

- **What is the role of media in the functioning of the councils?** Mainly is shedding the light in their work which helps them have good reputation among their people and their donors.

K. Civil Authority and legitimacy:

- **Do you think the local councils are legitimate to the eyes of the locals? How often is election done?** They are seen as the local government now, legitimacy differs between an area and the other.

- **What are the factors that hamper the ability of the councils to be recognized as centers of civil control and local authority? 1**) The presence of civilian bodies

affiliated with military actors. 2) The absence of a clear vision for the provided assistance to these councils by the western donors.

- **Do you have any data on how local councils are viewed by those supporters of the opposition living abroad? Do you have regular contact with them?**

L. Relationship with civil organizations:

- **Are you aware of any contact with civil society groups/NGO's, etc…? If so, can you mention which organizations or groups?**I didn't get the question

- **Do you think these organization play an important role in the development of the councils? In what ways?** Building their capacity, and connecting them with donors outside Syria.

- **In what ways do councils enhance the relationship with the civil society groups?**

I didn't get the question

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Respondent: Respondent 2 (Anonymous)

Company/Group: Syrian individual

Date: February 11, 2018

Appendix 4: Questionnaire Respondent 3

The Local Administrative Councils in Idlib
Interview Protocol sample – Respondent 3

A. Effectiveness:

- With more than six years since the establishment of the Local Councils, what are the experiences learned in terms of administrative and operational functions:
- Fund management
- Providing basic services
- Justice courts
- Efficient communication
- How do you describe the efforts of the local councils in following?
- Democratic procedures e.g. election processes
- Creating effective organizations
- Delineating decision-making procedures?
- How would the local councils systematize their work and plans despite of the difficult situation?
- Considering the historical Syrian context, how do you measure the level of transparency within the council?
- What is the level of relationship between the military groups and the local councils? In your opinion, does it affect or influence the decisions of the councils? In what way.
- Do you think corruption and inefficiency a big problem of the current regime? What measures in place by the councils in their staff and administrators?
- How is the participation and presence of women viewed by the councils?

B. The local council goals:

- What do you think are the main goals of the local councils?

Formation of a political body that will represent the liberated areas internationally and locally.

- In your opinion, can the local councils become the nucleus of future municipalities in a transitional government and ultimately assist in the formation of an elected government. What is your view on this? Do you think this is achievable?

1.1. It is a possibility, although I doubt the acceptance of such bodies in the future of Syria.

- In the distribution of aid and services whether from individuals, groups or nation, what measures do the councils apply in order to achieve justice and transparency?

Reports, still such transparency is imposed by the donor bodies in order to confirm the compliance of their grants. In my own opinion, it's impossible to ensure transparency in remotely-managed projects.

- What is the role of media in the functioning of the councils?

Media plays a key role in promoting LCs and their projects, what's the point of a conducted project without a media platform emphasizing its importance and who is behind it! The LC's have been lacking media support for a very long time but this enhanced in the last 2 years.

C. Civil Authority and legitimacy:

- **Do you think the local councils are legitimate to the eyes of the locals? How often is election done?**

I believe that locals care about services. The LCs are key bodies to provide and facilitate these services hence they are recognized locally. I am not familiar with the elections schedules.

- **What are the factors that hamper the ability of the councils to be recognized as centers of civil control and local authority?**

Affiliation with armed groups, lack of effectiveness in relation to service provision, lack of promotion and lack of civil society-related projects.

- **Do you have any data on how local councils are viewed by those supporters of the opposition living abroad? Do you have regular contact with them?**

I am aware that a lot of oppositionists abroad are supporting LCs as the only administrative bodies inside Syria, but I don't have any data or information or regular contact with them.

D. Relationship with civil organizations:

- **Are you aware of any contact with civil society groups/NGO's, etc…? If so, can you mention which organizations or groups?**

Yes, as an ex-worker with NGOs (GOAL). We used to have a point of contact with the LC in our areas of operation.

- **Do you think these organization play an important role in the development of the councils? In what ways?**

1.2. Not the NGO's, as they have very limited relationship with LCs. The LC's can only submit lists of families in need and based on the criteria we provided them with (e.g. Women headed households). However, the LC can use this chance to present itself as a facilitator to services in cities.

Thus, I don't see how the relationship with NGOs can effectively contribute to the development of LCs.

- **In what ways do councils enhance the relationship with the civil society groups?**

N/A.

Is there anything else you would like to add?

The local councils in northern Syria are newly born, they still have a long way to develop and be an effective civil administration body. It is also worth mentioning that being civil-related body is very difficult considering the existence of radical extremists and armed factions in town. The word "civil" itself is a threat to their ideology and the implications of this issue is clear in northern Syria. (e.g. Violet is a local NGO operating in JAN's areas, they were clearly instructed not to hire any female staff as it's prohibited by their Sharia).

Respondent: Anonymous
Company/Group: Humanitarian Aid and Relief
Date: 17/02/2018

Appendix 5: Questionnaire Respondent 4

The Local Administrative Councils in Idlib
Interview Protocol Sample – Respondent 4

A. Effectiveness

a. Fund management

1.1 LC developed its skills to manage fund from different donor on different projects. All LCs know that there work not only focus on livelihood project such as food basket, but they know now what is the project, and who should they work to get fund for projects.

b. Providing basic services

1.2 All LCs want to be the basic service provider, however not all of them can do this, therefore we can find three types of LCs: 1) who provide basic services ex: Sarakib, Maart alnouman. 2) who provide some services or monitoring on services offered by NGO, this is the case of the majority of LCs in Idlib. 3) LCs who don't offere basic services, and NGO didn't sign MOU with it, like LCs in Sinjar area or other marginalized areas.

c. Justice courts

1.3 There are different kinds of justice courts inside Idlib. Asad regime still have some, some liberated courts and the majority of Islamic courts which belong to armed actors. There is a week relation between LCs and justice courts dome time the relation is not existed.

d. Efficient communication

1.4 There different type of communication, the first one with public, majority of LCs has a Facebook page to publish their statements, the relation with NGOs can be measured by the MOUs and participation of LC in public meetings. Some strong LC has a direct contact with donors.

e. Democratic procedures

1.5 The majority of LCs still week in democratic procedures starting from appointment to election and so on. There is a high level of nepotism through the majority of LCs.

f. Creating effective organization

1.6 Majority of LCs has a problem with appointment, therefore they structure of LCs build on tribal or family system, this needs a time and a lot of efforts to be resolved. Therefore, the efficiency of LCs system is very low compared to NGO for example.

g. Delineating decision-making procedures

1.7 All LCs didn't build their decision on data, the most of their decision built on one-person opinion, in the best-case scenario the LC members held a meeting and agree on one things based on their opinion without evidence based.

h. Responding to military/political changes

1.8 When HTS toke control over Idlib, and call for Syrian national conference more than 50% of LCs support this, the majority of LC fall under HTS control, only few numbers of LC stand against HTS. In internal clashes between armed actors, some LC announced and call for isolate the town or the village from these clashes.

- They distribute tasks, announce for a bid, they start have some kind of documentation, however it is still in a low capacity
- Transparency now is higher than before, because it becomes a mandate to get the fund.
- Military groups try always to take control over LCs, and that happen when HTS did that wither in direct or indirect way, like have some representative in some LCs (Termanin) or take control over it by force (Idlib city)
- The big problem is there is no monitoring over LCs work, if the Idlib provincial council is enabled and supported, this will take a lead to control the attitude and the way of working with LCs.
- I don't have any idea about women participation in LCs

B. The local council goals

- From donor/NGO prospective, LC is the moderated entity which should work to establish basic services to community, some LCs understand this role, while some of them consider it as honor, power, legitimacy, authority.

N/A

- Usually council care more about IDPs, and this is because of the nature of people, some NGO have a list of all beneficiaries and tried to distribute aid equity between all people or based on needs.

- Media always is a powerful tool, any contribution will empower the LC

C. Civil authority and legitimacy

N/A

N/A

N/A

D. Relationship with civil organization

- BLLS, SRP, ASI

- Those organization played an important role in development these council