

**From 'complementarity' to conflict: A review of the economic policies of
Col. Muammar Gaddafi in Libya, 1969-2011**

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Abstract

The military administration of Colonel Muammar Gaddafi in Libya was woven around mixed feelings. Whereas his debut in 1969 was welcomed with high hopes among Libyans, Gaddafi appeared to have derailed years into his administration to become a dictator, which made him unpopular among his countrymen and the international community. This paper discusses the scenario that prompted the emergence of Gaddafi as the Libyan leader and his initial economic policies that endeared him to the people. The paper further demonstrates how the military leader became a dictator and was later humiliated, tortured, and killed by dissident soldiers with the aid of the international community. Employing extant literature, the paper attempts to balance some of the existing arguments on the administration, especially the economic policies under the Gaddafi regime. The evidence thrown up led to the major conclusion that the fall of Gaddafi became eminent as a result of his dictatorial style of leadership and his refusal to hand over power after ruling Libya for Forty-Two years.

Keywords: Conflict, Economic Policies, Muammar Gaddafi, and Libya

Introduction

Good leadership is a key component of the development of states. The transformation of societies like India and China, for instance, is attributed to the visionary leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Mao Tse Tung respectively. In Africa, the ingenious leadership of Leopold Senghor and Julius Nyerere launched Senegal and Tanzania on the path of economic growth and development.¹ Conversely, when leadership is of poor quality, development is hindered or stagnated and the masses suffer the consequences. Unfortunately,

¹A. Agbanusi, "The Legacies of the Foremost Patriots of African Nationalism" in *Mgbakoigba, Journal of African Studies*. Vol. 7, No. 2. (2018), <https://www.ajol.info/index.php/mjas/article/view/173181/162591>. Assessed 19/10/2020.



good and bad governance exist side by side in Africa and some Third World Countries (TWCs). It is common for some leaders who proclaim viable policies that center on ameliorating poverty and improving the economic well-being of their citizenry but turned to perform poorly after assuming power. This gives credence to the assertion by Lord Acton alludes,² that “power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely”

In the case of Col. Muammar Gaddafi, the beginning of his administration was sound as he responded favorably to the yearnings of Libyans. First, Gaddafi understood the importance of water in this “desert” country. Accordingly, he constructed dams to ensure an adequate supply of water to boost agricultural activities through irrigational farming. Gaddafi also provided free education to ease the stress of parents, as well as lift the literacy level in the country. His first order of business was to shut down the American and British military bases in Libya.³ He also demanded that foreign oil companies in Libya share a bigger portion of revenues with the country. Glamorous as his economic policies would appear, Gaddafi who started his political career with a dream of democracy, unionists, and socialists’ projects for his country ended up building has through the years total domination marked by violent repression, imprisonment, tortures, and murders of his people.⁴

As common with most historical events of interest, a lot has been written on the military administration of Gaddafi in Libya. For instance, Jibrin Ubale Yahaya⁵ has conducted a study that centers on Libyan politics and the contribution of Gaddafi's leadership style in promoting Libya as a nation. There is another contribution by Preechapak Tekasuk⁶ examines the collapse of Libya's foreign policy under Gaddafi. On his part, Maano Ramutsinandela⁷ focuses on “Gaddafi, Continentalism and Sovereignty in Africa” while Kathryn Sturman assesses the

²L. Acton, “Power Corrupt and Absolute Power Corrupt Absolutely” (2020), <https://www.acton.org/research/lord-acton-quote-archive>. Accessed 19/10/2020.

³M. Khan, and K. Mezran, “The Libyan Economy After the Revolution: Still No Clear Vision” *The Atlantic Council*. (2013), <https://www.atlanticcouncil.org/in-depth-research-reports/issue-brief/the-libyan-economy-after-the-revolution-still-no-clear-vision/>. Accessed 13/9/2020.

⁴J. U. Yahaya, “Libyan Politics and the Nature of Gaddafi Leadership Style in Promoting Libya as a Nation” (2013), 593, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340870391-libyan-politics-and-the-nature-of-gaddafi-leadership-style-in-promoting-libya-as-nation/>. Accessed 13/9/2020.

⁵J. U. Yahaya, “Libyan Politics and the Nature of Gaddafi Leadership Style in Promoting Libya as a Nation” (2013), 593-612, <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340870391-libyan-politics-and-the-nature-of-gaddafi-leadership-style-in-promoting-libya-as-nation/>.

⁶P. Tekasuk, “Towards its Collapse: A Reflection of the Failure of Libya's Foreign Policy under Gaddafi Rule” (2018), 1-14, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/323738028_Towards_its_collapse_A_reflection_on_the_failure_of_Libya's_foreign_policy_under_Gaddafi_rule. Accessed 15/9/2020.

⁷M. Ramutsinandela, “Gaddafi, Continentalism, and Sovereignty in Africa” (2018), 1-3, <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03736245.2009.9725324>. Accessed 15/9/2020.

rise of Libya as a regional player".⁸ The root of civil conflict in Libya has equally been assessed by Emanuela Paoletti.⁹ However, it does appear that nearly all the extant literature was written to discredit the administration of Gaddafi to the neglect of viable economic policies he embarked upon before becoming a dictator. This has created a gap for the present research to fill. To accomplish this, the work is structured into six segments with the first setting parameters for the discussion. This is followed by a discussion of the concepts of conflict and economic policies. There is also a segment that investigates the Libyan economy and the rise of Col. Muammar Gaddafi. The economic policies of Gaddafi in Libya are also discussed followed by an analysis of the Libyan crises and the fall of Gaddafi. There is also a concluding segment that attempts a recap of the central argument of the paper.

Concepts of Conflict and Economic Policies

The term conflict connotes "disagreement, misunderstanding, fight and/or confrontation, between two or more individuals, groups or parties aspiring towards incompatible or competitive means or end".¹⁰ Stagner¹¹ perceives conflict as a situation in which two or more human beings desire goals or values which they perceive as being obtainable by one or the other, but not both. In this case, each party is mobilizing energy to obtain a goal, the desired object, or situation, and each party perceives the other as a barrier or threat to the goal. Armed conflict, on the other hand, is the resort to the use of force and armed violence in the pursuit of incompatible and particular interests and goals.¹² Extrapolating from the foregoing, Libya, from the period 1870 to 1912 was a theatre of conflict. The source of the conflict was arising from the mobilization of energy by the Turks, the Italians, and Libyans to pursue their respective goals. For the Turks, they wanted to continue with the Ottoman rule in Libya. For the Italians, they desired to consolidate their "illegal" occupation of Libya. For the Libyans, they mobilized energy to resist all forms of foreign occupation. With the independence of Libya in 1952, it appears conflict has been expunged from Libya; however, conflict was still visible. This time, a conflict of interest between the ruling Sanusiyya dynasty and the military resultantly led to the coup that occasioned the collapse of the dynasty and ushered in the military regime of Gaddafi in 1969.

Another concept to be clarified is economic policies. This term connotes deliberate initiatives and strategies that are geared towards the economic

⁸K. Sturman, "The Rise of Libya as a Regional Power" (2014), https://www.academia.edu/1621736/THE_RISE_OF_LIBYA_AS_A_REGIONAL_PLAYER. Accessed 15/9/2020.

⁹ E. Paoletti, "Libya: Root of a Civil Conflict" 2011, 313-319, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/233145288_Libya_Roots_of_a_Civil_Conflict. (2018), Accessed 15/09/2020.

¹⁰ T. Wallensteen, *Understanding Conflict Resolution, War, Peace, and Global System*. (London: Sage Publishers, 2002), 5.

¹¹ R. Stagner, "Psychological Aspect of International Conflicts" in C. A. Garba (ed.). *Capacity Building for Crises Management in Africa*. (London: National War College, 1967), 57.

¹²D. J. Francis, "Peace and Conflict Studies: An African Overview of Basic Concepts" in S. G. Best (ed.). *Introduction to Peace and Conflicts Studies in West Africa*. (Ibadan: Spectrum Books, 2009), 20.

development of a group or state. The policies such as developmental plans are aimed and stimulating economic growth and the production and management of material wealth. The concept of economic development, therefore, has been the subject of scholarly debates overages. For instance, Sati argued that in the era before Adam Smith, development was perceived as the “promotion of ‘public happiness’...creation of wealth and greatness of nations and rulers, and the winning of wars”.¹³ Adam Smith and David Ricardo and their successors emphasized the economic dimension of development by focusing on wealth creation or economic growth and its causes. This thinking enjoyed some form of continuity in the period after World War II.¹⁴ Development economics, which emerged after World War II, continued with the emphasis on the economic dimensions of development by defining it as growth in the Gross National Product (GNP) and the reduction of poverty and inequality. GNP per capita income, therefore, measured in US Dollars defined which countries were low, middle, or high-income nations. The low and middle-income countries were labeled “less developed countries”, while those in the high-income category were labeled “more Developed countries”.¹⁵ The concept implies rapid changes that have occurred in the socio-economic and political growth of a state. The changes and growth must be felt at the level of individuals, at the level of social groups which Rodney argued implies an increasing capacity to regulate both internal and external relations.¹⁶ Accordingly, this paper conceives economic policies as ideas, developmental plans, and legal frameworks that are tilted towards ameliorating poverty and accelerating rapid changes (positive) and growth that is evident in the socio-economic, political, and cultural trajectories of a state over a specific period.

Understanding the Study Area

Libya is a Mediterranean country located in the North of Africa, with a total area of 1,790,540 Km² (about 685,500 square miles). It has borders with Egypt (1,115 km), Sudan (383 km) from the east, Algeria (982 km) and Tunisia (459 km) from the west, Chad (1,055 km), and Niger (354 km) from the south. To the north, Libya has a coastline on the Mediterranean Sea, extending for about 1900 km, with a continental shelf area reaching about 63595 Km², with a depth of about 200m.¹⁷ In terms of geographical configuration, Libya comprises three main regions: Tripolitania to the west (where the capital Tripoli is located, along the Mediterranean coast), Cyrenaica to the east (where Benghazi, the

¹³ F. U. Sati, “Politics and Development in Contemporary Nigeria: A Narrative of Un-freedom and the Roadmap to Development” in S. Ibrahim (*et al*), *Defence, Security, and Development in Nigeria*. (London: Bahiti& Dalila Publishers, 2017), 535.

¹⁴ F. U. Sati, “Politics and Development in Contemporary Nigeria: A Narrative of Un-freedom and the Roadmap to Development” 535.

¹⁵ F. U. Sati, “Politics and Development in Contemporary Nigeria: A Narrative of Un-freedom and the Roadmap to Development” 536.

¹⁶ W. Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972) 3-4.

¹⁷ M. A. Abuarosha, “Drivers and Obstacles of Agriculture Development in Libya: Case Study: Marine Aquaculture” (2013), <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19195>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

2nd largest city is located), and Fezzan to the south.¹⁸The Ottoman authorities (during the Ottoman rule in Libya) recognized them as separate provinces. However, under Italian rule, they were unified to form a single colony, which gave way to independent Libya.¹⁹For much of Libya's early history, both Tripolitania and Cyrenaica were more closely linked with neighboring territories than with one other.

In terms of geographical features, the country is characterized by gray-brown soils, alluvial plains, highlands, plateau, coastal deltas, mountains (Nafusal and Alakhdar), and a mix of sandy, rocky and volcanic deserts.²⁰Before the discovery of oil in the late 1950s, Libya was considered poor in natural resources and severely limited by its desert environment. The country was almost entirely dependent upon foreign aid and imports for the maintenance of its economy; the discovery of petroleum dramatically changed this situation, which could be seen in the succeeding sections of the paper.

Libyan Economy and the Rise of Col. Gaddafi

As a desert country, the Libyan economy was rural and underdeveloped.²¹Traditionally, it was an agricultural society relying on the cultivation and grazing of animals, mainly sheep, goats, and camels. This was reflected in the country's cuisine. Though it borders the Mediterranean, fish did not feature very prominently in the Libyan diet. Generally, there were four main components of the traditional Libyan diet: olives (and olive oil), palm dates, grains, and milk.²²Sadly, the country was divided and ruled by various European countries like Turkey and Italy. The Turks had early conquered Libya during the Ottoman suzerainty following the collapse of the byzantine empire. However, the congress of Berlin of 1878 encouraged the Italians in their desire to occupy Libya. The Italian occupation of the country evidenced the establishment of Banco di Roma (Bank of Rome) to finance investments. This led to the creation of an esparto grass mill for the production of paper in Tripoli and the establishment of a flour mill in Benghazi. The bank also financed the procurement of hectares of land for farming projects and the construction of hospitals and clinics to cater to Italian nationals.²³

Because the Italian occupation of Libya was for economic gains, the Libyan citizenry continued to wallow in abject poverty. Their political allegiance was either to the Turks, Italians, or to some extent, the Germans. This ugly development was linked to German's contestation of the occupation of Libya

¹⁸ D. Cordell, "Libya" <https://www.britannica.com/place/libya>. (2018), Assessed 15/10/2020.

¹⁹ B. Barkindo, M.Omolewa and E. N. Maduakor, *Africa & The Wider World I. West and North Africa Since 1800*. (Nigeria: Longman, 1989), 221-224.

²⁰ D. Cordell, "Libya" <https://www.britannica.com/place/libya>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

²¹ B. Barkindo, M.Omolewa and E. N. Maduakor, *Africa & The Wider World I. West and North Africa Since 1800*. 222.

²² M. A. Abuarosha, "Drivers and Obstacles of Agriculture Development in Libya: Case Study: Marine Aquaculture" (2013), <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19195>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

²³ B. Barkindo, M.Omolewa and E. N. Maduakor, *Africa & The Wider World I. West and North Africa Since 1800*. 224.

with Italy despite the Triple Alliance. However, following the Italian invasion and conquest of Libya which was evident with the capture of five (5) ports—Tripoli, Benghazi, Darna, Khums, and Tubruq, the Italians appeared to have consolidated their occupation of Libya. Expectedly, the Libyans resisted Italian rule in their country. With the support of the Turks, the Sanusiyya Brotherhood opposed the Italian invasion. The resistance of the Sanusiyya Brotherhood to Italian rule and later, the French and British rule after Libya was ceded to France and Britain following the end of the Second World War resultantly led to the independence of Libya in 1951.

With the Independence of Libya in 1951 under the Sanusiyya dynasty, Libya was still economically backward. The *Sanusiyya* dynasty, under the monarchy of King Idris I, kept Libya in total obscurantism and promoted British economic and military interests.²⁴ Even when oil reserves were discovered in 1959, the people did not benefit from the exploitation of wealth. Cordell²⁵ has noted that during the monarchical rule, the nation was mired in backwardness in education, health, housing, and social security, among others. The low literacy rates were shocking as only 250,000 inhabitants in Libya could read and write. The economic backwardness of Libya under the Sanusiyya dynasty continued until 1st September 1969 when a group of military officers led by Colonel Muammar Muhammad Abu Minyar al-Gaddafi, commonly known as Colonel Gaddafi, staged a bloodless coup d'état against King Idris while the king was in Turkey on medical vacation thereby abolishing the monarchical system and proclaiming the Arab Republic of Libya. Subsequently, Gaddafi proclaimed true independence and removed the dominant foreign forces from the country.

Economic Policies of Col. Muammar Gaddafi's Administration in Libya

The success of the 1 September 1969 military coup marked the beginning of a new dawn in the socio-political and economic trajectory of Libya. Libyan economic growth during the first decade of her independence was slow despite the discovery of oil resources. The slow pace of her economic development was a result of the “undue” interference and control of her economic resources by western powers, especially Britain and France. Again, the ethnic configuration of Libya with over 140 “tribes” and the resultant intolerance, hampered economic growth and development.²⁶ The first effort towards re-engineering the Libyan economic prosperity was, therefore, to “unite” the over 140 “tribes”. Another immediate measure undertaken by Gaddafi was that in 1970 he removed the U.S. and British military bases from Libya. He also expelled most members of the native Italian and Jewish communities from Libya that same year. In return, the Libyan leader worked and strengthened ties with neighboring countries of Egypt, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Chad. He equally strengthened relations with France and Russia as well as Latin American countries such as Venezuela and Cuba, which led him to cultivate an extensive network of contacts and uncomfortable influence on Europe and the U.S.

²⁴ “Libya: Before and after Gaddafi” <https://www.telesureenglish.net/analysis/libya-before-and-after-muammar-gaddafi-20200115-0011/>. Assessed 12/10/2020.

²⁵ D. Cordell, “Libya” <https://www.britannica.com/place/libya>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

²⁶ M. Asser, “The Muammar Gaddafi Story” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12688033>. Assessed 14/10/2020.

One of the first major economic policies undertaken by Gaddafi was the nationalization of all foreign-owned petroleum (oil) assets in the country. This was aimed at ensuring the economic sovereignty of Libya. Western oil companies such as British Petroleum (BP) were nationalized and Gaddafi created the National Oil Corporation (NOC), which characterized the configuration of a more socialist model.²⁷ Throughout his tenure, ambitious social programs were launched in the areas of education, health, housing, public works, and subsidies for electricity and basic foodstuffs. These policies led to substantial improvement in the living standards of the people of Libya. Consequently, Libya rose from being one of the poorest countries in Africa in 1969 to become the leading country on Human Development Index (HDI) on the continent in 2011. The United Nations Development Programme (2010) considered Libya a high-development country in the Middle East and North Africa. This translated status meant a literacy rate of 88.4 percent, a life expectancy of 74.5 years, and gender equality, among several other positive indicators.²⁸

Corroborating the above, Imam, Sadeeqe & Wader²⁹ argued that the nationalization of oil companies by Gaddafi marked a turning point in the economic history of Libya. With the nationalization, the Libyan government had access to oil revenues. Gaddafi demanded renegotiation of the contracts, threatening to shut off production if the oil companies refused. He memorably challenged foreign oil executives noting that “people who have lived without oil for 5,000 years can live without it again for a few years to attain their legitimate rights”.³⁰ The gambit succeeded and Libya became the first developing country to secure a majority share of the revenues from its oil production. Other nations soon followed this precedence and the 1970s Arab Petro-boom began. Foreign oil companies that operated in Libya were licensed and profits arising from the export of oil were shared and directed into the accounts of Libyans. Equally, Gaddafi directed oil companies to give their local subsidiaries Libyan names. Labour laws were also amended to ‘Libyanize’ the economy” and in 1970 the “equal pay for equal work law” was passed. Oil firms “were pressed to hire Libyan managers, finance people, and human resources directors.” With its large oil revenues and small population, Gaddafi was able to keep the incidence of poverty in Libya at a lower rate than in neighboring Egypt.³¹

²⁷ M. Asser, “The Muammar Gaddafi Story” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12688033>. Accessed 14/10/2020.

²⁸ M. Asser, “The Muammar Gaddafi Story” <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12688033>. Accessed 14/10/2020.

²⁹ M. Imam, S. Abba, Wader, M. M. “Libya in the Post Ghadaffi Era” *Valley International Journals*. <http://valleyinternational.net/index.php/our-jou/theijsshi>. Accessed 20/10/2020.

³⁰ M. Imam, S. Abba, Wader, M. M. “Libya in the Post Ghadaffi Era” *Valley International Journals*. <http://valleyinternational.net/index.php/our-jou/theijsshi>. Accessed 20/10/2020.

³¹ M. Imam, S. Abba, Wader, M. M. “Libya in the Post Ghadaffi Era” *Valley International Journals*. <http://valleyinternational.net/index.php/our-jou/theijsshi>. Accessed 20/10/2020.

Another important economic policy adopted by the Gaddafi administration was the rapid development of the agricultural sector. From 1970 to 2010 about 200 million LD was earmarked for agricultural purposes.³² The money was mainly spent on carrying out a range of agricultural and rural development programs and activities targeted at the reclamation and development of land. There was also implementation of such agricultural projects as tree planting, and fish and animal production. To support this, the administration also constructed the Great Man-Made River (GMMR) with the capacity to transport almost 2.5 million cubic meters of water daily. Piped through an underground network from the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer System in the Great Sahara Desert to the coastal urban centers (including Tripoli and Benghazi), the water covers a distance of up to 1,600 kilometers. The GMMR currently provides 70 % of all freshwater used in Libya and has supported irrigational farming in the country. This has resulted in an increase in food production in Libya and as well encouraged agricultural exports to countries in the Middle East.³³

Before the collapse of the Gaddafi regime in 2011, his economic policies had yielded reasonable outcomes. The policies led to an improvement in the well-being of the citizenry. Unlike many other Arab nations, women in Libya had the right to education, hold jobs, properties, and incomes. They equally maintained the right to divorce when it became necessary. The United Nations Human Rights Council praised Gaddafi for his promotion of women's rights. When the colonel seized power in 1969, few women went to university. Before his death, more than half of the students in Libyan universities were women.

Criticisms of the Gaddafi Regime in Libya

The economic prosperity of Libya during the years of Gaddafi is often criticized. Analysts and scholars have noted that even with the small population, the Libyan economy outside of the oil sector was grossly undeveloped. Toaldo.³⁴ has argued that, despite the continuous increase in government spending on development plans in the non-oil sectors, their productivity and contribution to the national income were inconsiderable. Although government priorities differed over time, depending on the political and economic conditions, the level of spending was constantly increasing. This contradiction between funding and performance played in the fact that there was always money available to spend.³⁵

³² M. A. Abuarosha, "Drivers and Obstacles of Agriculture Development in Libya: Case Study: Marine Aquaculture" 2013, <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19195>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

³³ P. Finn, "The Rise and Fall of Libyan Leader Moammar Gaddafi" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/nation-security/the-rise-and-fall-of-libyan-leader-moammar-gaddafi/> Assessed 23/5/2018.

³⁴ M. Toaldo, "Libya: Security, Economic Development and Political Reform" *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*. 2016, <https://www.fes-europe.eu/fileadmin/public/editorsfiles/events/maer-2016/FES-LSE-libya-security-economic-development-and-political-reform>. Assessed 23/7/2019.

³⁵ D. Cordell, "Libya" <https://www.britannica.com/place/libya>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

Gaddafi was also criticized for alleged support for radical groups and involvement in some acts of international terrorism.³⁶ For instance, his government received US trade restrictions and the withdrawal of some oil companies under Jimmy Carter. Under Ronald Reagan, a full-scale oil embargo and sanctions were imposed and Libya's capital (Tripoli and Benghazi) were bombed in April 1986. In 1989, Libyans were 'implicated' in the December 1988 bombing of a plane over Lockerbie, Scotland, and the September 1989 bombing of a UTA flight over Niger. As a result, the UN Security Council passed Resolution 748 imposing an economic embargo on Libya after Gaddafi refused to turn over the alleged terror suspects in 1992.³⁷ Although the direct impact of the sanctions became minor when world oil prices dropped in the 90s the ability of Gaddafi to maintain his social contract with Libyans was jeopardized. In effect, his political survival depended on reconciliation with the West.

The leadership style of Gaddafi has been equally criticized by some scholars. The Revolutionary Command Council (RCC), for example, which was the central decision-making body under Gaddafi was literally "hijacked" by the military leader. The 12-member team beginning from 1975 was reduced to five (5) Gaddafi loyalists. He consolidated his control by removing both civilian and military personnel suspected of potential disloyalty from the country's planning institutes and ministries. Sensitive security and army positions were steadily filled by members of his tribe, the Qadhadhfa, and allied tribes. His regime also systematically destroyed civil society: political parties, independent trade unions, and other civil organizations were prohibited. Opponents were imprisoned, tortured, executed, or even sent into exile. Televised executions were undertaken to create an environment of fear and helped strengthen control by Gaddafi.

Libyan Crises and the Fall of Gaddafi

Beginning from the very moment Gaddafi ousted King Idris 1, there were resentments within Libya. This was evident in December 1969 when Egyptian intelligence thwarted a planned coup against Gaddafi from high-ranking members of his leadership. In response to the failed coup, Gaddafi criminalized all political dissent and shared power with his family and closest associates.³⁸ The control of state power by Gaddafi, his family, and his closest associates received criticism. Surprisingly, by 2010 Saif al-Islam, who was a son of Gaddafi, became practically in charge of political power in Libya. Meanwhile, the Jamahiriya did not prove to be a government for the masses as widely claimed. Under the Jamahiriya system, the masses were dragooned into attending popular congresses vested with no power, authority, or budgets. This they did with the fear that anyone who spoke against the regime could be carted off to prison. Several draconian laws were enacted in the name of upholding security. This further undermined claims of championing freedom from

³⁶ M. A. Abuarosha, "Drivers and Obstacles of Agriculture Development in Libya: Case Study: Marine Aquaculture" 2013, <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19195>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

³⁷ M. A. Abuarosha, "Drivers and Obstacles of Agriculture Development in Libya: Case Study: Marine Aquaculture" 2013, <http://shura.shu.ac.uk/19195>. Assessed 15/10/2020.

³⁸ P. Finn, "The Rise and Fall of Libyan Leader Moammar Gaddafi" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/nation-security/the-rise-and-fall-of-libyan-leader-moammar-gaddafi/> Assessed 23/5/2018.

oppression and dictatorship by the Gaddafi administration. Consequently, even some of the people that previously complimented the administration of Gaddafi began to oppose him.

Apart from the personalization of state power, Gaddafi was also alleged to have committed ethnic cleansing. He was accused of expelling Italian settlers in 1970 as well as sponsoring anti-Berber hate campaigns. More so, in the 1970s, Gaddafi personally presided over the execution of members of the Islamist fundamentalist; Hizb-utTahrir faction of the Islamic faith.³⁹ Again between 1980-1987, Gaddafi employed his network of diplomats and recruits to assassinate at least 25 critics living in Europe and other parts of the world. His revolutionary Committee called for the assassination of Libyan dissidents living abroad in April 1980, thereby deploying Libyan "hit squads" abroad to murder them.⁴⁰ Also, on the 26th April 1980, Gaddafi announced a deadline of 11th June 1980 for dissidents to return home or be "in the hands of the revolutionary committees. Expressing his anger about Libyans dissidents living abroad in 1982, Gaddafi noted that *"it is the Libyan people's responsibility to liquidate such scums who are distorting Libya's image abroad"*.⁴¹ Libyan agents had assassinated dissidents in the United Kingdom, the United States, and the Middle East. Even in 2004, Libyan under Gaddafi provided bounties on critics living abroad.

Internationally, the nationalization of oil reserves by Gaddafi received resentment from home governments of various companies. His anti-imperialist campaigns across the globe and alleged involvements in acts of international terrorism placed him on the "watch" of most western leaders. For instance, the bombing of a nightclub used by US soldiers in Berlin in 1986, blamed on Libyan agents, proved a decisive moment. As a fallout, the US President, Ronald Reagan, ordered airstrikes against Tripoli and Benghazi in retaliation for the two soldiers and one civilian killed, as well as dozens that were wounded.⁴² The US retaliation was intended to kill the "mad dog of the Middle East", as Reagan branded him. Sadly, there was extensive damage and an unknown number of Libyan fatalities.

Internal and external signals were already becoming unfavorable to Gaddafi. However, the straw that finally broke the camel's back began on 17th February 2011 in Benghazi when Anti-Gaddafi elements started protesting about obvious abnormalities in the socio-economic architecture of Libya. The first wave of protest was dominated by the masses and the Muslim community in Benghazi who was not favorably disposed to his rule. Within that same February, the

³⁹P. Finn, "The Rise and Fall of Libyan Leader Moammar Gaddafi" <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/nation-security/the-rise-and-fall-of-libyan-leader-moammar-gaddafi/> Assessed 23/5/2018.

⁴⁰M. Toaldo, "Libya: Security, Economic Development and Political Reform" *Friedrich Ebert Stiftung*. 2016, <https://www.fes-europe.eu/fileadmin/public/editorsfiles/events/maer-2016/FES-LSE-libya-security-economic-development-and-political-reform>. Assessed 23/7/2019.

⁴¹C. Davidson, "Why Was Muammar Qadhafi Removed?" 2007, <https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12310>. Assessed 23/7/2019.

⁴²M. Asser, "The Muammar Gaddafi Story" 2014, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-12688033>. Assessed 14/10/2020.

country was rapidly descending into chaos and the government had lost control of Eastern Libya. The protesters hinged their campaign on the autocratic rule of Gaddafi and the dictatorship that personified him. Expectedly, Gaddafi fought back, accusing “protesters” of being “drugged” and linked to al-Qaeda. His military forces went after and killed rebelling civilians. Gaddafi relied heavily on the Khamis Brigade, led by one of his sons Khamis Gaddafi, and other tribal leaders loyal to him to unleash terror on the protesters. There were also allegations that Gaddafi had imported foreign mercenaries to defend his government.

The violent response that Gaddafi choose to unleash on protesters prompted several defections from his government. For instance, his second in command, Abdul Fatah Younis, Mustafa Abdel-Jalil, and several key ambassadors and diplomats resigned from their respective posts in protest. Subsequently, other government officials refused to follow orders from the Gaddafi junta and were jailed for insubordination. However, the intervention of the international community and the subsequent coordination of airstrikes in Libya signaled the beginning of the end of the Gaddafi regime. The airstrike of 30th April 2011 in Tripoli killed Gaddafi’s sixth child and three grandchildren. This was followed by more airstrikes by NATO in Tripoli and Sirte, and the gradual loss of international recognition of the government of Gaddafi. Finally, the defeat of the regime occurred on 20th October 2011 when Gaddafi was killed by members of the National Transitional Council (NTC) in Sirte.⁴³

Conclusion

What has been observed is that some economic policies were in place before the rise of the military administration that took over power in 1969. However, the administration of Gaddafi initiated some key economic changes during its early years, which initially placed Libya on the roadmap to economic prosperity. These economic policies were able to transform Libya as was seen in great improvement in the standard of living of the citizenry and the unprecedented increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in Libya. However, autocratic rule and the alleged involvement of Gaddafi in acts of international terrorism gradually resulted in the collapse of his regime in October 2011. This raises the submission that Gaddafi was the very factor responsible for his collapse.

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⁴³ T. Gaynor and T. Zargoun, “Gaddafi’s Death—Who Pulled the Trigger?” 2011, <https://www.reuters.com/article/us-libya-gaddafi-finalhours/gaddafis-death-who-pulled-the-trigger/> Assessed 5/10/2020.

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