



# NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

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## THESIS

**MAPPING LIBYAN JIHADIST NETWORKS FOR UW**

by

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December 2015

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**MAPPING LIBYAN JIHADIST NETWORKS FOR UW**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of

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## **ABSTRACT**

The post-Gaddafi Libyan war continues along fractured lines of allegiance. Various militia networks are in open armed conflict with each other and pitted against other jihadist networks. The central government is split in two and the United Nations is working to broker a unity government that can offer at least a partial solution. One of the contributing factors to this conflict and the pervasiveness of jihadist networks in Libya is a Libyan history of conflict stretching back to World War I. These jihadist networks arose both before and during the civil war. The latest jihadist organization to entrench itself in the civil war is the Daesh. In this thesis, Daesh's expansion in Libya is explored through the lens of a political process model. Then, jihadist networks in Libya are mapped. Their social ties between each other and other non-jihadist elements of Libyan civil society are illuminated in a search of candidate brokers. The most influential jihadist brokers are identified and ranked in terms of their relative influence. Finally, these insights are used to help define new strategies for contending with jihadists in Libya.

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	THE PROBLEM .....	1
II.	HISTORICAL BACKGROUND .....	3
A.	ORIGINS OF THE SANUSI BROTHERHOOD .....	5
B.	THE FIRST ITALO-SANUSI WAR .....	7
C.	THE SECOND ITALO-SANUSI WAR .....	8
D.	THE KINGDOM OF LIBYA .....	9
E.	THE GADDAFI REGIME.....	11
F.	CONCLUSION .....	15
III.	REVIEW OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY LITERATURE AND DAESH EXPANSION IN LIBYA .....	17
A.	WHY .....	17
B.	INFLUENCE.....	19
C.	DAESH EXPANSION IN LIBYA THOUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY .....	22
D.	DAESH IN LIBYA AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL ....	24
E.	THE MOUNTAIN GOES TO MOHAMMED.....	26
IV.	SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS .....	33
A.	INTRODUCTION .....	33
B.	METHODOLOGY .....	33
C.	OVERALL NETWORK.....	35
D.	ANALYSIS OF OTHER JIHADIST NETWORKS.....	39
1.	Hafiz al-‘Aghuri .....	39
2.	Abd al-Baset Azzouz .....	40
3.	Jalal Makhzoum .....	41
4.	Imad al-Mansuri .....	41
5.	Mohammed al-Darsi.....	42
6.	Wissam Bin Hamid .....	43
E.	ANALYSIS OF DAESH IN LIBYA.....	43
1.	Turki al-Binali .....	44
2.	Wissam Abed Zaid al-Zubeidi (Abu Nabil al-Anbari) .....	45
3.	Hassan al-Karami.....	46
V.	CONCLUSION .....	49

<b>LIST OF REFERENCES.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST .....</b>	<b>63</b>

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.	Jihadist Network Ties .....	37
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## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1.	Jihadist Brokerage Scores.....	38
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## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AQ	al-Qaeda
AQI	al-Qaeda in Iraq
BSRC	Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council
CORE	Common Operational Research Environment
FSA	Free Syrian Army
GNC	General National Congress
IS	Islamic State
ISIS	Islamic State in Iraq and Syria
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
SMT	Social Movement Theory
SNA	Social Network Analysis
UW	Unconventional Warfare

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## I. THE PROBLEM

Since the overthrow of the Muammar Gaddafi Regime in 2011, the security situation in Libya has deteriorated. On December 3rd, 2014, the United States Department of State issued a joint statement with several European allies on Libya indicating that “they expressed grave concern over the deteriorating situation in Libya and welcomed the announcement by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Bernardino Leon, that he will convene on December 9 a new round of talks bringing together key Libyans.”<sup>1</sup> The deteriorating security situation allowed some jihadist groups in Libya to declare formal allegiance to the Islamic State.<sup>2</sup> Libyan stability and security are in the national interests of both the United States and its European allies.

Libyan political society is polarizing along ideological lines. One group, represented by the ousted General National Congress (GNC) and backing General Kalifa Haftar, is more secular and liberal. Aligned against the GNC are the Islamists and Jihadi groups primarily represented by the Tripoli-based Libya Dawn Government.<sup>3</sup> Some of these groups openly conduct training camps and recruiting activities that move fighters to Syria and Iraq under the auspices of the Islamic State.<sup>4</sup> There is also an array of state actors—including Egypt, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates—that are looking to protect their own security interests in Libya. This body of research will map Jihadist networks inside Libya and identify if there are any fissures that can be exploited, in an effort to provide insight for policy makers and allow them to formulate effective

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<sup>1</sup> "Joint Statement on Libya." U.S. Department of State. December 3, 2014. Accessed December 15, 2015. <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/12/234622.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> David Stout, “Report: ISIS Takes Control of a Libyan City,” *Time*, November 19, 2014, <http://time.com/3593885/isis-libya-iraq-syria-terrorism-derna/>.

<sup>3</sup> “Libyan Dawn: Map of Allies and Enemies,” *Al Arabiya Institute for Studies*, August 25, 2014, <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/alarabiya-studies/2014/08/25/Libyan-Dawn-Map-of-allies-and-enemies.html>.

<sup>4</sup> Borzou Daragahi, “US General Confirms Presence of Isis Fighters in Libya,” *Financial Times*. December 4, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/582dc63c-7bbb-11e4-b6ab-00144feabdc0.html#axzz3OkC1xJe0>.

strategies that lead to an outcome favorable to the United States. This project will also add to a growing database of analysis on social movement theory and its application to unconventional warfare.

This thesis begins with an historical overview of Libya's past and how it has fostered the now fractious conflict and the rise of jihadist networks. It then turns its attention to Daesh, the latest jihadist network to entrench itself in the civil war. In particular, through the lens of the Doug McAdam's political process model,<sup>5</sup> it explores Daesh's expansion into Libya. Next, ties between jihadist networks in Libya and other non-jihadist elements of Libyan civil society are mapped in a search for actors in positions of brokerage. The most influential jihadist brokers are identified and ranked in terms of their relative influence. Finally, the results are examined to determine what methods or strategies can be applied to reduce the threat the jihadist networks in Libya pose. This project also adds to a growing database of analysis on social movement theory and its application to unconventional warfare.

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<sup>5</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982).

## II. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Jihadist emigration is one facet of support sustaining the Islamic State. Fighters from around the globe, united by a belief that they are fighting for a just Islamic cause that supports the Ulama, have left their communities behind for Jihad. The geographical region of Cyrenaica (eastern Libya), in particular, stands out from others in Libya as a source of these jihadist emigrants. During the U.S. occupation of Iraq, this region accounted for 88% of Libyan jihadists immigrating to there.<sup>6</sup> The region continues to provide manpower for the Islamic State, and also harbors training bases for the fighters. As recently as December 2014, United States intelligence reports have observed large training camps in eastern Libya.<sup>7</sup> Historical events in Libya—especially those in the eastern region of Cyrenaica—have contributed to this trend of jihadists embarking from, and returning to, Libya. This chapter’s analysis of historical events provides a basis for understanding how jihadist groups in Libya relate to other factions, the population, and the government.

This phenomenon of jihadist emigration from eastern Libya can be traced, in part, to two separate—yet related—historical developments. The first was the establishment of the Sunni Islamic order in the early 20th century by the fierce insurgencies against Italian colonial rule led by the Grand Sanusi.<sup>8</sup> These rebellions left a collective mark of armed resistance on Cyrenaician society.<sup>9</sup> The second was the ideological vacuum created by policies of the Gaddafi régime—a vacuum that was filled, in part, with the radical Islamic ideology that is still

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<sup>6</sup> Joseph Felter and Brian Fisherman, “Al-Qa’ida’s Foreign Fighters In Iraq: A First Look at the Sinjar Records,” Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, January 2, 2007, <https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/al-qaidas-foreign-fighters-in-iraq-a-first-look-at-the-sinjar-records>.

<sup>7</sup> Paul Richter, “U.S. Concern Grows over Islamic State Fighters Training in Libya,” *Los Angeles Times*, December 12, 2014, <http://www.latimes.com/world/africa/la-fg-libya-isis-20141212-story.html>.

<sup>8</sup> Edward E. Evans-Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1949).

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*

observable in this region today. It is important to note that Gaddafi and his fellow officers removed the Grand Sanusi's grandson from the throne in 1969.<sup>10</sup>

In order to understand how these two factors relate to each other, it is necessary to first explore the history of the Sanusi order and how they rose to power—not just in Cyrenaica, but also across a large part of North Africa. Over time, the Sanusi transformed from a religious brotherhood to a political organization, and eventually came to be seen as another puppet of Western interests during the early period of Libyan statehood.<sup>11</sup> The modern order was shaped in large part by international politics after each World War.<sup>12</sup> The pinnacle of Sanusi political achievement came during the creation of the Kingdom of Libya by United Nations decree.<sup>13</sup> The officially recognized Kingdom was short-lived and ultimately replaced by a coup of Libyan military officers known as the Revolutionary Command Council led by Muammar Gaddafi.<sup>14</sup>

It is under Gaddafi's dictatorship that we first see the evolution of jihadist emigration from Libya to various conflict zones.<sup>15</sup> We will examine how Gaddafi's policies created space in eastern Libya's social fabric that fostered favorable conditions for radical Islamists in places like Derna, Benghazi, and Sirte—areas where Islamists are very visible at this time. Modern Libyan jihadists have fought in Afghanistan, Iraq, and Syria—and they also continue their struggle at home with the February 17th Revolution. These events, influenced by Libya's past experience, are still evolving today. Finally, we will explore current jihadist

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<sup>10</sup> "A Country Study: Libya," Library of Congress, January 1, 1987. <http://lcweb2.loc.gov/frd/cs/lytoc.html>.

<sup>11</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 158.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> Library of Congress, "Country Study: Libya."

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>15</sup> Evan F. Kohlmann and Josh Lefkowitz, "Dossier: Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG)," NEFA Foundation, October 1, 2007, <http://web.archive.org/web/20121004030826/http://www.nefafoundation.org/miscellaneous/nefalifg1007.pdf>.

developments in eastern Libya and the developing connections between the Islamic State and Libya.

#### **A. ORIGINS OF THE SANUSI BROTHERHOOD**

The Sanusi order of Islam originated in Mecca, Saudi Arabia. It was founded by Algerian scholar and reformer Sayyid Muhammad bin Ali al-Sanusi.<sup>16</sup> Sanusi traveled widely across the Sahara and into Saudi Arabia, sampling various forms of Sufism and combining what he felt were the best aspects of each school of thought into his own ideal.<sup>17</sup> “It is true that the Grand Sanusi, like the founder of the Wahhabi movement aimed at restoring what he conceived to be the original society of the Prophet. Both movements created states, Wahhabi in Arabia and the Sanusi in Cyrenaicia, based explicitly on religious particularism [sic].”<sup>18</sup> It is this basic traditional conservative premise that perhaps, in modern times, has provided refuge for some of the more radical views on political Islam in eastern Libya. The Sanusi order, while conservative, was far from violent or exclusionary.<sup>19</sup> As Mohammed bin Otsman el-Hachaichi once stated: “I have seen only cheerful and smiling faces, welcoming me with benevolence and kindness. May God reward them.”<sup>20</sup> The Grand Sanusi discouraged the trappings of poverty followed by other Sufi Marabouts.<sup>21</sup> His vision was that the brotherhood should be self-supporting.<sup>22</sup> This was a daunting prospect, given the Bedouin way of life.<sup>23</sup> After being forced to leave Mecca, Sanusi created his first *zawiya* (lodge) in Cyrenaica at Al-Bayda.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 6.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 8.

<sup>20</sup> Mohammed bin Otsman el-Hachaichi as quoted in Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 7.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 6.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, 9.

Geographically, Cyrenaica is cut off from neighboring countries by deserts.<sup>25</sup> The isolation and stark contrast between the green Mediterranean coastal areas and the interior created a homogeneous population amongst the Bedouin that Sanusi was able to deftly influence.<sup>26</sup> The Bedouin tribal system embraces common traditions and a strong feeling of community bound by blood.<sup>27</sup> In establishing and growing his order, Sanusi used connections he made during previous travels to Mecca.<sup>28</sup> After taking ill for a period of time in Siwa (Cyrenaica), Sanusi traveled to Tripoli (Tripolitania) in August of 1841 where he stayed with friend and protector Ahmad pasha al-Muntasir.<sup>29</sup> Early in his travels, Turkish administrators viewed Sanusi with suspicion.<sup>30</sup> Even so, the Sanusi order was able to exploit areas of influence outside of the Turkish administration's grasp.<sup>31</sup> "The Sanusiya thus used the Turks to buttress its position in its dealings with the tribes, and combined with the tribes to resist any encroachments on its prerogatives by the Turkish Government."<sup>32</sup> Here we see an example of the Sanusi order working to unite the tribes. The three sides had a mutual understanding.<sup>33</sup> The Sanusi Order did not ask the tribes to change their ways. Instead, they only sought to be a positive moral influence on their behavior<sup>34</sup> and the tribes welcomed religious men who worked to improve conditions.<sup>35</sup> And the Turks understood that they could never subdue the entire country in the event of a revolt, so they were careful to only ask for reasonable

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 9.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>28</sup> Viktor Knut, *Sufi and Scholar on the Desert Edge: Muḥammad B. 'Alī Al-Sanūsī and His Brotherhood* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1995), 137.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 99.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.



taxation, peace, and autonomy.<sup>36</sup> Pritchard termed it “mutual tolerance.”<sup>37</sup> This balance stayed in relative equilibrium until world events changed Italy’s strategic interests and the Ottoman Empire in the first decade of the 20th century. During this period of conflict the Sanusi Order morphed from a religious brotherhood that dabbled in administration out of self-interest into a political administration that represented the tribal interests and satisfied their constituents’ desire for religious order.<sup>38</sup> Also during this period, the fierce resistance of the Cyrenaician tribes against the Italians was put on full display.<sup>39</sup>

## **B. THE FIRST ITALO-SANUSI WAR**

With the exception of their resistance to French expansion north from Lake Chad into the Sanusi-controlled Sahara, the order was not viewed as overtly militaristic.<sup>40</sup> On 29 September 1911, the Italians declared war on Turkey and opened hostilities with the bombardment of Derna the following day. This period marks the beginning of an organized, armed Libyan resistance to foreign invaders.<sup>41</sup> “The Italians expected a walk-over and were surprised, then alarmed, at the resistance they had to overcome.”<sup>42</sup> They also underestimated the level of cooperation between the Turks and the Libyan tribes. The Turkish garrisons could not have lasted long against the Italians without indigenous support. The nature of the war changed quickly due to the tribes’ willingness to resist the Italians.<sup>43</sup> It changed from a struggle between great nation-states pitted against each other, to an attempt to deal with unexpected native resistance, and finally to an occupying and aggressive European power trying to deprive native peoples of

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

<sup>37</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 99.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

<sup>41</sup> Library of Congress, “Country Study: Libya.”

<sup>42</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 110.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

their liberty. When Turkey made peace with Italy in October of 1912, this by no means ended the war for the Sanusi order. Instead, “the order now occupied a governmental status of a semi-autonomous state, and as such it led the armed resistance to Italian rule.”<sup>44</sup> Turkey’s peace with Italy marked the beginning of an independent Sanusi armed resistance to foreign occupation. This is particularly true in Cyrenaica, the Sanusi center of power.<sup>45</sup> A low intensity conflict continued until 1917 when Sheikh Sidi Idris—successor to the Grand Sanusi and the future king of Libya—negotiated a truce with Italy. The foundation of resistance to foreign occupation was laid during the First Italo-Sanusi War and continued during the second chapter of that conflict.

### C. THE SECOND ITALO-SANUSI WAR

“On 6 March 1923 The Italians, without delivering an ultimatum or declaration of war carried out their secret and long-prepared plan to seize the mixed camps and the Sanusi camp of Khawalan, taking about half the Sanusi soldiers prisoners.”<sup>46</sup> The fascist government of Italy nullified any previous policy or agreements with the Sanusi that recognized Libyan self-rule.<sup>47</sup> The second war left several indelible marks on Cyrenaician society—scars that especially resonated with those with jihadist leanings.<sup>48</sup> The second war cemented the fierce rebellious nature of Cyrenaician bedouin tribes and created a national hero in Sheik Omar Mukhtar. The war also served to further cement the role of Idris as the future King of Libya. Finally, and most importantly, it marked the near complete destruction of the Sanusi system of influence, “leaving bare beneath it the hard wood of the tribal system.”<sup>49</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 162.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 156.

<sup>48</sup> Andrew McGregor, “The Libyan Battle for the Heritage of Omar Al-Mukhtar,” *Jamestown Foundation*, March 10, 2011, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=37628#.VlyES4TaEm8](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=37628#.VlyES4TaEm8).

<sup>49</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 166.

The Italians recognized the cultural center of gravity that the Sanusi order represented to Libyans and set about its systematic destruction. Unable to fight a decisive battle against the Sanusi-led tribes, the Italians switched to brutal tactics aimed at tribal encampments and outposts.<sup>50</sup> “What gave the Bedouin the courage to endure the hardships and bereavements of the struggle? Certainly those two great sentiments, patriotism and religion.”<sup>51</sup> The second war took on the even greater proportions of a holy war—one that was led by a holy man who would become a legend.

Sheik Omar Mukhtar was born in 1862 and took on a prominent role in the first Italian war. He was selected to lead the Cyrenaican resistance when Idris went into exile in Egypt. Mukhtar was over 60 years old.<sup>52</sup> The story of his leadership is legendary. “Today the cult of Omar al-Mukhtar is visible everywhere in Darnah: on posters, billboards, stickers on car windshields. His face may be more ubiquitous even than Kaddafi's.”<sup>53</sup> He was eventually captured and hanged in a concentration camp in front of twenty thousand people. With Mukhtar's death, the Sanusi-led revolt died and Libya fell under near-total Italian control. The memory of this holy struggle is seared in the minds of Libyans.

#### **D. THE KINGDOM OF LIBYA**

Tobruk is a city of the dead. Not a house is whole and most are either rubble or roofless and the place is deserted. No Arabs are yet allowed to live in the town though a few come in to work. No Italians left.

—Peter Syngé

In 1943, with the retreat of Italian and German forces, Muhammad Idris Sanusi made a triumphant return to Libya.<sup>54</sup> Following the near destruction of the

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<sup>50</sup> Library of Congress, “Country Study: Libya.”

<sup>51</sup> Evans-Pritchard, *Sanusi of Cyrenaica*, 162.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 169.

<sup>53</sup> Kevin Peraino, “The Jihadist Riddle,” *Newsweek*, April 19, 2008, <http://www.newsweek.com/cover-jihadist-riddle-85605>.

<sup>54</sup> Library of Congress, “Country Study: Libya.”

Sanusi order and the onslaught of World War II, the question of Libya was put to the United Nations. At the time, Great Britain, France, and Italy each administered over what is now Libya.<sup>55</sup> The effects of nearly thirty years of conflict in Libya were abundant: nearly half of its people were refugees; ninety percent were illiterate; and the largest sector of the economy was the sale of scrap metal salvaged from battlefields.<sup>56</sup> Idris did his best to repair a society that lacked a social structure, since it had been largely built around the now-ravaged Sanusi order. In 1959 Exxon (then Esso) discovered oil in Cyrenaica, and for a period Libya's future looked bright. Idris's Monarchy maintained close ties to the West, and sought to transform Libya's economy.<sup>57</sup> Eventually, Idris's loose federal system could not deliver on its promises of progress and was replaced by a unitary state monarchy with a powerful central government.<sup>58</sup> Historic geographical divisions in Libya were subdivided into 10 separate provinces with a head appointed by the central government.<sup>59</sup> Despite this transformation, the pace of progress continued to lag in the eyes of those who did not benefit from the newfound wealth.<sup>60</sup>

Despite efforts by the monarchy to promote a sense of Libyan nationalism, the society broke down further into a politicized urban elite faction that favored non-alignment and the rest who remained in relative poverty and did not obtain much benefit from the Western-leaning central government.<sup>61</sup> The Monarchy also oversaw a period of tremendous social change. Between 1963 and 1973, the number of Bedouin living traditional lifestyles went from 320 thousand down to 200 thousand—so that they comprised less than 10% of the total population.<sup>62</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Libya."

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

<sup>61</sup> Library of Congress, "Country Study: Libya."

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

By September of 1969, these various factions within Libya could endure no more, and a group of Army Officers led by Muammar Gaddafi overthrew the Monarchy. While King Idris tried his best to cobble back together what the Sanusi system had once constructed in Libya, the destruction of the Sanusi system would now continue during the reign of Gaddafi.

## **E. THE GADDAFI REGIME**

Gaddafi and his fellow officers came into power during a bloodless coup. Initially, he was seen as quasi-Muslim fundamentalist, and his system of political reform borrowed heavily from Islamic tradition.<sup>63</sup> For example, he wanted legal matters to be examined in light of Sharia Law and insisted that all laws should be based upon this principle.<sup>64</sup> However, in spite of his talk in favor of an Islamic-based society independent of outside influences, Gaddafi would alter his narrative and policies to suit what was required to maintain a consolidation of power. In the 1970s, after another overthrow attempt, his régime “deliberately removed tribal institutions from its political and administrative processes, confining them to the social sphere instead: administrative boundaries were deliberately drawn to break up tribal unities; and, new ‘modernizing administrators’ [sic] without local tribal affiliations were brought in to replace the traditional shaykhs.”<sup>65</sup> In the late 1980s, Gaddafi reversed his policy yet again and courted tribal leaders.<sup>66</sup> He was anxious to court these leaders again because they could help him identify oppositionists to the regime.<sup>67</sup>

Not all of the social changes that occurred in Libya during Gaddafi’s reign are traceable to causes that were under his control. The period of his régime

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<sup>63</sup> John Ruedy, ed. *Islamism and Secularism in North Africa* (New York: St. Martin’s, 1994), 190.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>65</sup> Omar El-Fathaly, Monte Palmer, and Richard Chackerian, *Political Development and Bureaucracy in Libya* (Lexington, MA: Lexington, 1977), 92.

<sup>66</sup> Jason Pack, ed., *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 29.

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*

continued to see a massive movement of people into urban areas. 77% of Libyan citizens now lived in urban areas, with the cities of Tripoli and Benghazi areas accounting for 51% of the total population. Gaddafi did manage to provide improvements in education and healthcare.<sup>68</sup> In his time, the number of universities went from two to nine.<sup>69</sup> However, improvements in the quality of life and educational opportunities were not enough to fully address the underlying reasons for social unrest in Libya.

When Gaddafi came to power, his policy changes heralded a new era of Islamic culture in the country. These changes were short lived. Between 1973 and 1977 the Régime ordered changes to religious institutions—removing the control of religious charities and mosques from the *ulama* and redefined religious law.

Moreover, Qadhafi's interpretation of Islam was considered radical. He considered the Quran to be the only source of sharia and community. As did other "Muslim reformers, Qadhafi saw deviation from "true" Islamic teachings as the cause of the weakness of Islamic lands, including Libya. Like them, he also called for a return to the source, the Quran. But unlike most other reformers, Qadhafi excluded the hadith and the sunna (the lifestyle and deeds of the Prophet) as reliable sources of legislation. By questioning the authenticity of the hadith, Qadhafi has in effect dismissed the entire edifice of traditional *fikh* (Islamic jurisprudence). As one scholar, Ann Elizabeth Mayer, put it, "discrediting the hadith entails rejection of by far the greater part of Islamic law." In essence, Qadhafi rejected *taqlid* (obedience to received authority, i.e., the revelation of God to the Prophet Muhammad) in favor of *ijtihad* (the right to interpretation).<sup>70</sup>

This further removed and isolated any influence or institutional basis that the Sanusi order might have leveraged to bring about another régime change. How Gaddafi perceived the Sanusi threat is also evidenced by his downplaying

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Library of Congress, "Country Study: Libya."

of the role that the order played in the resistance to Italian occupation.<sup>71</sup> In 1978, Gaddafi seized several mosques and replaced their Imams with ones who were more favorable to his views.<sup>72</sup> “Qadafi’s [sic] defacto secularism, anticlericalism, and defacto anti-sufism have forced the Libyan Opposition to defend the traditional Ulama of urban centers.”<sup>73</sup> These policies provided a key rallying point for those with more conservative or traditional views of Islam to capitalize on—especially those from Cyrenaica who viewed Gaddafi’s rule as foreign because of his bizarre views of Islam.

Gaddafi’s oppressive practices drove many young Libyans toward the Afghan Jihad in the 1980s, and in later years to The Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG). In a 2005 interview, Noman Bentoman stated: “You have to take into account the situation in Libya toward the end of the 1980’s. A lot of young people felt desperate because the regime made it very hard for people of Islamic persuasion to express their opinion.”<sup>74</sup> The origins of the LIFG predate its official announcement in 1995 by nearly ten years.<sup>75</sup> In the late 1980s and early 90s, more radical elements of Islamists found ideological conditions in Libya favorable.<sup>76</sup> “In addition to receiving military training from Al-Qaida instructors, LIFG recruits were also indoctrinated in Afghanistan by influential jihadist clerics such as Al-Qaida co-founder Dr. Abdullah Azzam, whose jihadist writings were later posted on the LIFG’s Internet website.”<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

<sup>73</sup> John Ruedy, *Islamism and Secularism*, 195.

<sup>74</sup> Noman Bentoman, interview with Mahan Abedin, “From Mujahid to Activist: An Interview with a Libyan Veteran of the Afghan Jihad,” *Spotlight on Terror* 3, no. 2 (March 21, 2005), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews\[swords\]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx\\_ttnews\[any\\_of\\_the\\_words\]=benotman&tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=27728&tx\\_ttnews\[backPid\]=7&cHash=7ddcfa3e774b1a5b4715308c09b12ead#.Vikl77zaEm8](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[swords]=8fd5893941d69d0be3f378576261ae3e&tx_ttnews[any_of_the_words]=benotman&tx_ttnews[tt_news]=27728&tx_ttnews[backPid]=7&cHash=7ddcfa3e774b1a5b4715308c09b12ead#.Vikl77zaEm8).

<sup>75</sup> Kohlmann and Lefkowitz, “Dossier: Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.”

<sup>76</sup> Alison Pargeter, “Political Islam in Libya,” *Jamestown Foundation*, May 5, 2005, [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews\[tt\\_news\]=306#.VITY6ludkm8](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews[tt_news]=306#.VITY6ludkm8).

<sup>77</sup> Kohlmann and Lefkowitz, “Dossier: Libyan Islamic Fighting Group.” (LIFG website no longer exists, this statement is also echoed by Bentoman and Pargeter).

Amongst the jihadists in Afghanistan and their fellow ideologues in Libya, a realization developed that they could use their experience in Afghanistan to overthrow Gaddafi—and thus the LIFG was born. The LIFG was not focused on global Jihad.<sup>78</sup> They were primarily concerned with the overthrow of the Gaddafi apostate régime. In response to increasing Islamist unrest, Gaddafi further increased repression of Islamic fundamentalists. His régime carried out a ruthless offensive in Cyrenaica. Men with beards were arrested and women wearing niqab were expelled from universities.<sup>79</sup> “In short the Mosque became the one place in Libyan society where the Gaddafi regime could not crush all dissent or eliminate preexisting social networks.”<sup>80</sup> To make matters worse, those who were rounded up and thrown in prison did not receive any trial. Others were simply eliminated by the régime. On at least one occasion, this occurred en masse. In June of 1996, the government killed approximately 1,200 prisoners at Abu Salim prison in Tripoli.<sup>81</sup> It would be years before the families would learn the fate of their loved ones.<sup>82</sup>

By 1998, the LIFG and other Islamists were largely neutralized.<sup>83</sup> With the US invasion and overthrow of the Taliban régime in Afghanistan, the LIFG network in Afghanistan was disbanded as well.<sup>84</sup>

This led to a period of warming diplomatic relations between Libya and the West. In 2007, reformers within the régime led by Saif al-Islam Gaddafi hoped to further leverage Western interests by offering amnesty to LIFG members and

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<sup>78</sup> Leela Jacinto, “Africa - Shifting Loyalties among Libya’s Islamists,” *France 24*, last modified August 5, 2011, <http://www.france24.com/en/20110805-libya-uprising-islamists-rebels-ntc-Gaddafi-fighters-transition-council-shifting-allies/>.

<sup>79</sup> Pack, *2011 Libyan Uprising*, 198.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, 199.

<sup>81</sup> Pack, *2011 Libyan Uprisings*, 200.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>83</sup> Mahan Abedin, “From Mujahid to Activist: An Interview with a Libyan Veteran of the Afghan Jihad,” *Spotlight on Terror* 3, no. 2 (March 21, 2005), [http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx\\_ttnews%5Btt\\_news%5D=178&no\\_cache=1#.VIT4Qoudkm8](http://www.jamestown.org/single/?tx_ttnews%5Btt_news%5D=178&no_cache=1#.VIT4Qoudkm8).

<sup>84</sup> Pack, *2011 Libyan Uprisings*, 200.



other Islamists.<sup>85</sup> More than 1000 were released from Abu Salim, including over 200 LIFG members.<sup>86</sup> Some had fought in Afghanistan. Less than 60 months later, the Gaddafi era was over—but its impact on Libya did not dissipate. “The embryonic civil society that had begun to take shape under the monarchy had been atomized, and civil freedoms had been suppressed.”<sup>87</sup>

## F. CONCLUSION

“With all forms of civil society activity utterly dominated by pro-Qadhafi bodies and in the absences of effective opposition within Libya it was perhaps unsurprising that Libyan opposition activist would begin to look outside the country and to more radical ideologies for solutions.”<sup>88</sup> If you take Bentoman’s conclusion and view it in light of the brutal wars between the Sanusi and Italy—which resulted in the loss of the unifying force encompassed in the Sanusi order its desire for a traditional and unified Libyan society—it becomes clear how violent radical Islam could take root and inspire droves of Libyans to take on the mantle of violent Jihad, both at home and abroad.

The current situation is even more complex. Not only are jihadists moving from Libya to Syria and Iraq, they are also returning home to fight in larger numbers. The Islamic State established a foothold in the eastern Libya town of Darnah.<sup>89</sup> In the 1990s, LIFG recruiters found residents of the town of Darnah particularly receptive to jihadist propaganda.<sup>90</sup> The town’s costal location with easy access to sea lines of communication makes travel relatively easy—a factor that helps to explain its high representation in the Sinjar records. But this is only

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid., 202.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 203.

<sup>87</sup> Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *Forgotten Voices: Power and Agency in Colonial and Postcolonial Libya* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 82–83.

<sup>88</sup> Pack, *2011 Libyan Uprisings*, 210.

<sup>89</sup> Mirco Keilberth, Juliane von Mittelstaedt, and Christoph Reuter, “The ‘Caliphate’s’ Colonies: Islamic State’s Gradual Expansion into North Africa,” *Spiegel Online*, November 18, 2014, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/islamic-state-expanding-into-north-africa-a-1003525.html>.

<sup>90</sup> Pack, *2011 Libyan Uprisings*, 210.

part of the story—other underlying causes for the Libyan emigration include the ideological, social, and historical reasons addressed in this essay. Given the history of Cyrenaica, it is surprising that we do not find even more willing recruits from this region. “Despite its oil largesse, the east appears to be almost devoid of infrastructure aside from its oil industry.”<sup>91</sup> It appears that there is not much else to live for if you are a young man in eastern Libya.

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<sup>91</sup> N.P. Beida, "A New Flag Flies in the East." *The Economist*. February 24, 2011. Accessed December 15, 2015. [http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2011/02/libya\\_fragments](http://www.economist.com/blogs/newsbook/2011/02/libya_fragments).

### III. REVIEW OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY LITERATURE AND DAESH EXPANSION IN LIBYA

This literature review encompasses the following points: first, why Libya is important; and second, an analysis of the role that influence plays within jihadist networks in Libya. The role of influence is further discussed in terms of leadership and the concept of brokerage can play in determining outcomes. Finally, I will illustrate how Daesh is expanding in Libya using the political process theory to explain what factors they are exploiting in Libyan society to support their movement.

#### A. WHY

Recent literature covering the changing nature of warfare in the Twenty-first Century indicates that future conflicts will be carried out primarily against networks instead of traditional state actors. Max Boot's book, *Invisible Armies*, outlines how Unconventional Warfare (UW) is not necessarily a new phenomenon. He provides dozens of illustrations where smaller weaker forces (guerillas or non-state actors) have taken on stronger opponents. Boot argues that if the underdogs can cooperate with conventional forces, receive adequate assistance, and produce an effective narrative (or propaganda), they will be more likely to succeed.

The United States Army's latest operating concept entitled, "Win in a Complex World," is a formal acknowledgement that superior firepower and strength of numbers alone do not guarantee a victory. "Win' occurs at the strategic level and involves more than just firepower."<sup>92</sup> It defines a complex operating environment as such: "Complex is defined as an environment that is not only unknown, but unknowable and constantly changing."<sup>93</sup> Fredrick Wehrey

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<sup>92</sup> Department of the Army, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World* (TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1) (Ft. Eustis, VA: Headquarters, United States Army, 2014), <http://www.tradoc.army.mil/tpubs/pams/TP525-3-1.pdf>.

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

summarizes the social complexities of the post-revolutionary environment in Libya by noting that “it is easy to trace Libya’s breakdown as a political struggle between Islamists and liberals.”<sup>94</sup> In reality, it is a complex mixture of local and regional power brokers, former Gaddafi-era technocrats, and contemporary revolutionaries, some of whom are former exiled or imprisoned Islamists.<sup>95</sup> Muammar Gaddafi kept the country together by deftly manipulating multiple layers of traditional tribal interactions, secular urban elites, and Islamists seeking return to Sharia governance.<sup>96</sup>

In 2011, the United States and NATO supported an uprising to ouster the longtime Libyan dictator. The short-term aim was achieved. Gaddafi was gone and an internationally recognized Transitional National Government stood in its place. But, Al-Qaeda and like-minded Islamist groups also viewed the Libyan revolution as an opportunity. Atiyah al-Libi, an AQ-linked leader killed in 2011, wrote in “The Arab Revolutions and the Season of Harvest” that AQ senior leadership’s strategic goal in Libya was to foster “a real, radical, and revolutionary change that would affirm the supremacy of Allah’s words and the dominance of sharia.”<sup>97</sup>

Daesh in Iraq and Syria also seeks to leverage the post-revolution chaos. One similarity between the AQ and Daesh models for expansion is that both groups seek to exploit social and political grievances harbored by local populations.<sup>98</sup> Additionally, both have a cadre of experienced fighters who have served in Syria and Iraq that they can leverage when they return home.<sup>99</sup> One key difference is that Daesh allows and encourages local fighters to carry out

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<sup>94</sup> Fredrick Wehrey, “What’s behind Libya’s Spiraling Violence?” *Washington Post*, July 28, 2014, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2014/07/28/whats-behind-libyas-spiraling-violence/>.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

<sup>96</sup> Pack, *2011 Libyan Uprisings*, 202.

<sup>97</sup> Federal Research Division, *Al-Qaeda in Libya*.

<sup>98</sup> Aaron Y. Zelin, “The Islamic State’s Model,” *Washington Post*, January 28, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/01/28/the-islamic-states-model/>.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

their own struggles against both their near enemy and Western targets as well.<sup>100</sup> All of this occurs simultaneously while Daesh provides limited and unobtrusive support for local administration.<sup>101</sup> Utilizing an inverse approach, AQ wants their franchises to carry out attacks against Western Targets.<sup>102</sup> One example is the recent assault on Charlie Hebdo in Paris carried out by an AQ fighter trained in the Arabian Peninsula.

Both AQ and Daesh have had relative degrees of success in leveraging aspects of the post-Libyan revolution environment favorable for social movements in order to achieve their long-term objectives. AQ and DAESH are competing and trying to mold Libya into an outcome that favors their goals.<sup>103</sup>

## **B. INFLUENCE**

To influence the outcome in Libya, policy makers should not think in terms of a revolutionary change, but rather in terms of an evolutionary transformation of the environment in such a way that it becomes politically favorable to U.S. interests and less attractive to elements of Radical Islam. The costs associated with revolutionary change in Libya would be too great. Seif al-Islam Gaddafi recognized this truth and attempted a similar process in Libya prior to the revolution.<sup>104</sup> These influence operations can be broken down into those that focus on the following areas: personal, structural, and relationships. There is a large body of academic literature covering social movement theory (SMT) and social network analysis to support these three areas.

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<sup>100</sup> Zelin, "Islamic State's Model."

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

<sup>103</sup> Clint Watts, "Jihadi Competition after Al Qaeda Hegemony – The 'Old Guard', Team ISIS & the Battle for Jihadi Hearts & Minds," *Foreign Policy Research Institute*, February 1, 2014, <http://www.fpri.org/geopoliticus/2014/02/jihadi-competition-after-al-qaeda-hegemony-old-guard-team-isis-battle-jihadi-hearts-minds>.

<sup>104</sup> Omar Ashour, "Deradicalization Revisited," *Washington Post*, February 18, 2015, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/monkey-cage/wp/2015/02/18/deradicalization-revisited/>.

In identifying who in Libya's jihadist movements would be in a position to influence outcomes, we can search for potential individual and groups with certain characteristics. Max Weber defined charismatic authority as "a certain quality of an individual personality by virtue of which he is set apart from ordinary men and endowed with supernatural, superhuman, or at least specifically exceptional powers or qualities."<sup>105</sup> One such charismatic leader was Omar Mukhtar. Both jihadists and non-jihadists alike utilize Mukhtar's legacy for their own gains.<sup>106</sup> Weber also stated that leadership could be derived from traditions or from a formal position in a bureaucracy.<sup>107</sup> Leaders will also exhibit cultural, social, and symbolic capital:<sup>108</sup> cultural capital is displayed in ties to an "aggrieved community and external audiences"; social capital is encompassed in strong ties to the sympathetic activist community while also using linkages to "broad mobilizing networks."<sup>109</sup> Symbolic capital displays are derived from traits like magnetism, prestige, and a moral authority.<sup>110</sup> For Daesh's nascent movement in Libya two such individuals, Turki al-Binali and Hussein al-Karami, both described in the next chapter, embody Weber's description. For a movement to achieve success, these leaders need to diffuse their ideas and orders across a population. This diffusion can be understood in terms of brokerage. As Han Shin-Kap notes, the right person is more than just a good leader; the best mobilizers (leaders/brokers) will occupy key terrain in a network that facilitates mobilization of the movement.<sup>111</sup> Additionally, they will fulfill their

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<sup>105</sup> Max Weber, "Transformation of Charisma in an Anti-Authoritarian Direction," in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free, 1964).

<sup>106</sup> McGregor, "Heritage of Omar Al-Mukhtar."

<sup>107</sup> Ibid.

<sup>108</sup> Sharon Nepstad and Clifford Bob, "When Do Leaders Matter? Hypotheses on Leadership Dynamics in Social Movements," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 11, no. 1 (February 2006): 1–22, <http://mobilization.metapress.com/openurl.asp?genre=article&issn=1086-671X&volume=11&issue=1&spage=1>.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid.

<sup>111</sup> Shin-Kap Hap, "The Other Ride of Paul Revere: The Brokerage Role in the Making of the American Revolution," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (June 2009): 143–62.

roll for primarily altruistic versus personal needs.<sup>112</sup> In other words, they will place the needs of the movement over their own desires for personal enrichment.

Leadership means little if a movement cannot sustain itself. The mobilization and struggle that follows require resources, which are often controlled by individuals or small groups who occupy positions of brokerage between groups. Ronald Burt refers to these gaps or cross paths as ‘structural holes.’<sup>113</sup> Burt identifies four levels of brokerage.<sup>114</sup> Simple brokerage makes people in groups on either side of a structural hole aware of the interests and difficulties of the other group. The next level is transferring. Transfer brokers see value in the other group’s belief or practice and translate it into a form that is digestible for the new group. The third level is analogical. Analogical brokers draw analogies between two ostensibly irrelevant groups so they can each recognize beneficial value in the ideas, beliefs, and behavior of the other. The highest level of brokerage is synthesis. At this level, an observer would actually see a combination of new beliefs and behaviors from the other group present in the new group.<sup>115</sup> These positions of brokerage can be either used to enhance or disrupt a network.<sup>116</sup>

The final component of Influence is found in relationships. Pre-existing social bonds are most important when it comes joining a violent Islamist movement.<sup>117</sup> According to the Center for Security Policy, over 300 Battar

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> Ronald S. Burt, *Structural Holes: The Social Structure of Competition* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1992).

<sup>114</sup> Ronald S. Burt, “Structural Holes and Good Ideas,” *American Journal of Sociology* 100, no. 2 (September 2004): 349–99, doi: 10.1086/421787.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid.

<sup>117</sup> *Third Public Hearing of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks upon the United States*, 108th Cong. (July 9, 2003) (statement of Marc Sageman), [http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/hearings/hearing3/witness\\_sageman.htm](http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/911/hearings/hearing3/witness_sageman.htm).

Brigade fighters have returned home to Libya from Syria.<sup>118</sup> The Islamic State sent a Sharia Law expert and another expert to assist in establishing Islamic Government.<sup>119</sup> In this respect, the jihadists are working to prevent micro-mobilization of opposition while enhancing their own position towards mobilization.<sup>120</sup>

Leaders, structure, and relationships are just a few of the aspects that define a social network. For the purpose of this thesis, the defined social networks are armed Libyan jihadists seeking to implement their vision of Sharia governance.

### **C. DAESH EXPANSION IN LIBYA THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY**

In his book, *Disrupting Dark Networks*, Sean Everton outlines methods for disrupting these networks. His recommendations range from kinetic approaches to non-kinetic methods, such as institution building, psychological operations, information operations, rehabilitation and reintegration, and tracking and monitoring.<sup>121</sup> Doowan Lee expands upon these ideas in developing a social movement approach to Unconventional Warfare.<sup>122</sup> According to Lee, a social movement campaign requires two conditions: First, a resistance movement has to already exist. Second, those existing social movements must be “malleable with UW objectives.”

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<sup>118</sup> Matt Bauer, “Islamic State’s Libyan Expeditionary Force,” *Center for Security Policy*, November 20, 2014, <http://www.centerforsecuritypolicy.org/2014/11/20/islamic-states-libyan-expeditionary-force/>.

<sup>119</sup> Paul Cruickshank et al., “ISIS Comes to Libya,” *CNN*, November 18, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2014/11/18/world/isis-libya/>.

<sup>120</sup> Doug McAdam, “Micromobilization contexts and recruitment to activism,” *International Social Movement Research* 1, no. 1 (1988): 126.

<sup>121</sup> Sean F. Everton, “Strategic Options for Disrupting Dark Networks,” in *Disrupting Dark Networks* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2012), 32–37.

<sup>122</sup> Doowan Lee, “A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare,” *Special Warfare* 26, no. 3 (July-September 2013): 29–32.



Daesh can be categorized as a social movement that incorporates the characteristics of leadership and brokerage previously described. Building from Raymond's work on mapping the Islamic State and his description of leadership ties to the Iraqi Bath Party and subsequent connections to the Camp Bucca Prison an ensuing analysis of Daesh's methods of expansion in Libya will reveal similar ties and the relative impact that brokerage has on their social movement in Libya.<sup>123</sup>

Daesh is emerging as a political entity vying for legitimacy as a political system of governance in Libya. Its current expansion into Sirte should not come as a surprise.<sup>124</sup> In October of 2014, The *Libyan Herald* reported that Daesh planned to start a television station in Sirte.<sup>125</sup> *The Herald's* report occurred weeks before a jihadist network further east in Derna declared allegiance to the Islamic State.<sup>126</sup> IS sent two emissaries to establish their beachhead on Libyan soil. Abu Wissam Abdu Zaid al-Zubaidi and Abu Baraa Azdi used techniques they learned in Iraq and applied them in Derna.<sup>127</sup>

The Daesh model for expansion can be understood in light of Doug McAdam's political process model and the four factors it identifies that need to be in place in order for a social movement to emerge: broad socio-economic processes, expanding political opportunities, indigenous organizational strength,

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<sup>123</sup> Derek J. Raymond, "Combatting Daesh: A Socially Unconventional Strategy" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015).

<sup>124</sup> Jared Malsin, "ISIS Re-Establish Their Hold On Qaddafi's Home Town after Crushing a Rebellion," *Time*, August 19, 2015, <http://time.com/4003049/isis-sirte-rebellion/>.

<sup>125</sup> Ajnadin Mustafa, "ISIS to Launch TV Station Based in Sirte: Report," *Libya Herald*, October 12, 2014, <http://www.libyaherald.com/2014/10/12/isis-to-launch-tv-station-based-in-sirte/#axzz3UPXxW4hg>.

<sup>126</sup> Cruickshank et al., "ISIS Comes to Libya."

<sup>127</sup> Rachid Khachaneh, "Libya's IS Expansion Puts Egypt, Tunisia, Algeria under Threat," *Al-Monitor*, March 15, 2015, <http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/security/2015/03/libya-isis-control-algeria-egypt-tunisia-impact.html#>.

and cognitive liberation.<sup>128</sup> Daesh in Libya is exploiting these factors in order to enhance its effectiveness.

McAdam's four areas allow for analysis and understanding about how the Islamic State is working and expanding in Libya. McAdam's model assumes that a centralized state government works to suppress political activism.<sup>129</sup> In Libya, the internationally recognized government ousted from Tripoli (and now in Tobruk) is led by Prime Minister Abdullah al-Thanni.<sup>130</sup> This government exercises little control over much of the country. A second government spawned from dissatisfied Islamists is now based in Tripoli and has elected Omar al-Hasi as their Prime Minister.<sup>131</sup> In reality, neither government has total control of the whole country. Separate bands of Islamists, jihadists, and militias exercise physical control in their respective areas and determine who or what ideologies should be suppressed or silenced locally. Instead of a centralized government denying or repressing political opportunities, each of the various factions in Libya exerts influence or repression to forward their own agenda or enhance mobilization while suppressing rivals.

#### **D. DAESH IN LIBYA AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL**

Broad social economic processes contributing to the emergence of Daesh have been occurring in Libya since the overthrow of the Senussi Monarchy in 1969. Initially, when Gaddafi and his fellow officers came into power during a bloodless coup, he was seen as quasi-Muslim fundamentalist, and his system of political reform borrowed heavily from Islamic tradition.<sup>132</sup> "With all forms of civil

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<sup>128</sup> Doug McAdam, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930–1970* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1982).

<sup>129</sup> Ibid.

<sup>130</sup> "The World Fact Book: Libya," Central Intelligence Agency, last modified October 28, 2015, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ly.html>.

<sup>131</sup> Feras Bosalum, "Libya's Ex-parliament Reconvenes, Appoints Omar al-Hasi as PM," *Reuters India*, August 25, 2014, <http://in.reuters.com/article/2014/08/25/libya-security-parliaments-idINKBN0GP18O20140825>.

<sup>132</sup> Robert Beuerlein, "Why Are There so Many Extremists in Eastern Libya?" Jihadi Information Operations, Naval Postgraduate School, December 16, 2014.

society activity utterly dominated by pro-Qadhafi [sic] bodies and in the absences of effective opposition within Libya it was perhaps unsurprising that Libyan opposition activist [sic] would begin to look outside the country and to more radical ideologies for solutions.”<sup>133</sup> Gaddafi’s removal left a security void that Daesh has, in part, filled. In Derna, the city where Daesh gained its initial foothold, Human Rights Watch has reported that, since 2013, unknown assailants have murdered at least five judges and prosecutors, a female lawmaker, and a security official.<sup>134</sup> There is no evidence that Daesh was involved in these assassinations in order to remove any potential opposition prior to the arrival 300 Libyan jihadists, who fought with the Daesh affiliated Al-Battar battalions at Deir Ezzor in Syria and then Mosul in Iraq.<sup>135</sup> These returning jihadis helped start the Shura Council for the Youth of Islam in Derna, a pro-Daesh faction.<sup>136</sup> With its connections to the al-Battar Brigade, Daesh deftly navigated the troubled social, political, and economic disparities in Derna to establish its foothold.

With a Libyan foothold established, Daesh could exploit political opportunities in the post-revolution environment. The establishment of two separate political bodies in Libya allowed it to enhance its prospects as an alternative to either the Islamist government in Tripoli or the recognized government in Tobruk. For example, IS-aligned jihadists recently took over Gaddafi’s hometown of Sirte.<sup>137</sup> Another Islamist militia from Misrata called Brigade 166 surrounded Sirte. The brigade commander acknowledged that

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<sup>133</sup> Noman Bentoman, Jason Pack, and James Brandon, “Islamists,” in *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post-Qadhafi Future*, ed. Jason Pack (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 200.

<sup>134</sup> “Libya: Extremists Terrorizing Derna Residents,” *Human Rights Watch*, November 27, 2014, <http://www.hrw.org/news/2014/11/27/libya-extremists-terrorizing-derna-residents>.

<sup>135</sup> Cruickshank et al., “ISIS Comes to Libya”; “Lybia,” *Human Rights Watch*.

<sup>136</sup> “Lybia,” *Human Rights Watch*.

<sup>137</sup> Aaron Y. Zelin, “The Islamic State’s Burgeoning Capital in Sirte, Libya,” *Washington Institute for Near East Policy*, August 6, 2015, <http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-islamic-states-burgeoning-capital-in-sirte-libya>.

several of his IS fighters are from Misrata, and they were somewhat loath to attack the center of Sirte because of their tribal connections.<sup>138</sup>

The fact that some jihadist factions are loath to repress or dismantle Daesh-aligned factions reveals a division among jihadi elites that opens another avenue for expanding political opportunities. Additionally, the Islamic State's hold on Sirte demonstrates its pragmatic approach to Libya. When Daesh forced former government workers to sign repentance statements Daesh acted in a manner consistent with McAdam's model and exploited fissures within the local population there.<sup>139</sup> Sirte benefited from the Qaddafi regime, and it is possible that those who were employed by the regime are now sitting in the out-group in terms of both the Islamist government in Tripoli and the ousted Tobruk government. Daesh offers former regime supporters and bureaucrats a second chance. Daesh is leveraging broad socioeconomic processes and political opportunities to improve their indigenous organizational strength.

#### **E. THE MOUNTAIN GOES TO MOHAMMED**

The fourth component to McAdam's political process model is indigenous organizational strength.<sup>140</sup> A key element of this is conversion potential, which in layman's terms, is the process of bringing people over to your side or your point of view.<sup>141</sup> Daesh again operates in a manner consistent with McAdams description.

The city of Derna in eastern Libya has a long and well-documented history as a fertile recruiting ground for jihadist movements. Daesh views Libya in the

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<sup>138</sup> David D. Kirkpatrick, "ISIS Finds New Frontier in Chaotic Libya," *New York Times*, March 10, 2015, <http://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/11/world/africa/isis-seizes-opportunity-in-libyas-turmoil.html>.

<sup>139</sup> Maggie Michael, "Libya Is Presenting a Perfect Opportunity for ISIS," *Associated Press*, February 18, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/islamic-state-militants-find-a-foothold-in-chaotic-libya-2015-2>.

<sup>140</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*, 43.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, 44.

same manner as al-Qaeda (AQ), if only to deter their adversary.<sup>142</sup> Atiyah al-Libi, an AQ linked leader killed in 2011, wrote in “The Arab Revolutions and the Season of Harvest,” that AQSL’s strategic goal in Libya is to foster “a real, radical, and revolutionary change that would affirm the supremacy of Allah’s words and the dominance of sharia.”<sup>143</sup> Those seeds of conversion were planted by the formation of Katiba al-Bittar al-Libi brigade, which aligned itself with Daesh in Syria. The brigade is alleged to have a unit dedicated solely to recruiting Libyans.<sup>144</sup>

If there is a weakness for Daesh according to McAdam’s model, it lies in its indigenous organizations. The Islamic State is not only vying for ousted former regime sympathizers in Sirte but is also looking to attract other radical Islamist movements in Benghazi, Tripoli, and Derna away from other jihadist camps.<sup>145</sup> USAFRICOM Commander David Rodriguez stated “ISIL has begun its efforts over in the east out there to introduce some people over there.”<sup>146</sup> The demographics in Libya are not the same as those in Iraq. There is no large Shia-Sunni split from which to attract adherents. There is, however, a split over which type of government is best suited for the Libyan people. Daesh has thus far been able to able to exploit this and General Haftar provides a convenient target that all jihadist networks can portray in a tyrannical and almost evil nature.

In McAdam’s model communication networks and leadership are examples of Daesh’s indigenous organizational strength. Its propaganda film

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<sup>142</sup> Thomas Joscelyn, “In Dabiq Magazine, Islamic State Complains about Jihadist Rivals in Libya,” *Long War Journal*, September 13, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/09/in-dabiq-magazine-islamic-state-complains-about-jihadist-rivals-in-libya.php>.

<sup>143</sup> Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, *Al-Qaeda in Libya: A Profile* (Washington, DC: Federal Research Division, Library of Congress, 2012), <https://www.fas.org/irp/world/para/qa-libya-loc.pdf>.

<sup>144</sup> Aymenn Jawad Al-Tamimi, “Muhajireen Battalions in Syria (Part Two),” *Syria Comment*, April 25, 2014, <http://www.joshualandis.com/blog/muhajireen-battalions-syria-part-two/>.

<sup>145</sup> “ISIL Tightens Grip on Libya’s Derna,” *Al Jazeera English*, March 7, 2015, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/isil-tightens-grip-libya-derna-150307090237967.html>.

<sup>146</sup> David Rodriguez, “Department of Defense Press Briefing by Gen. Rodriguez in the Pentagon Briefing Room on Ebola Response,” Department of Defense, December 3, 2014, <http://www.defense.gov/Transcripts/Transcript.aspx?TranscriptID=5548>.

showing the beheading of Egyptian Coptic Christians and the subsequent seizure and defense of Sirte suggest a centralized production that mimics propaganda from Iraq and Syria. However, communicating and coordinating the local movement on the ground in Libya may prove difficult. Many of the IS fighters who have come to Libya are actually foreigners.<sup>147</sup> Daesh has tried to smooth this issue over by sending one of its top religious leaders, Turki al-Binali, to preach in Sirte. Ironically, Binali is a foreigner himself from Bahrain.<sup>148</sup>

Daesh's movement in Libya will require effective indigenous leadership.<sup>149</sup> "The existence of established organizations within the movement's mass base insures the presence of recognized leaders who can be called upon to lend their prestige and organizing skills to the incipient movement."<sup>150</sup> Al-Baghdadi sent Wissam Abd al-Zubaidi, one of his most trusted confidants and the former governor of Salahuddin province who led the takeover of Tikrit and Beiji, to Libya.<sup>151</sup> The Daesh is buttressing its "indigenous movement" with the ideological leadership of Binali and the organizational leadership of al-Zubaidi, and backing them up with Libyan fighters from the al-Battar Brigade to present the impression that Daesh in Libya is a localize movement.

Each of these factors presented by McAdam would, if successful in its own right, lead to the state of cognitive liberation. He highlights Piven and Cloward's three necessary cognitions. First, observers in meaningful numbers must perceive that the current institutional systems have lost legitimacy.<sup>152</sup> Second, those who ordinarily accept authority in a fatalistic manner must change

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<sup>147</sup> Khachaneh, "Libya's IS Expansion."

<sup>148</sup> Ibid.

<sup>149</sup> The following chapter highlights Daesh's brokerage deficit relative to other jihadist networks in Libya.

<sup>150</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*.

<sup>151</sup> Khachaneh, "Libya's IS Expansion."

<sup>152</sup> Frances Fox Piven and Richard A. Cloward, *Poor People's Movements: Why They Succeed, How They Fail* (New York: Pantheon, 1977), 4.

their views and begin to assert their rights.<sup>153</sup> Finally, this same section of society must come to believe that they have a capacity (maybe even an obligation) to change the circumstances in which they find themselves.<sup>154</sup> “Even in the unlikely event that these necessary cognitions were to develop under conditions of weak social integration, the absences of integrative links would almost surely prevent their spread to the minimum number of people required to afford reasonable basis for successful collective action.”<sup>155</sup> McAdam emphasizes that this cognitive liberation must be integrated socially. As applied to Islamic State expansion in Libya, Daesh as a social movement must win over more than several isolated jihadist groups or disparate communities.

McAdam’s political process model provides a framework for understanding how trust and influence impact the Islamic State’s expansion into Libya. Broad socio-economic forces have been at play in Libya since the Italo Senussi wars. The discovery of oil and the expectations of modernization, coupled with Arab Nationalism, provided another social pressure that compromises a portion these broad socio-economic forces.

Just as we can use McAdam’s model to understand Daesh’s expansion in Libya, we can also use it to analyze how Daesh interacts with other jihadist networks and non-jihadist factions in Libya. This is no easy task, since the groups opposed to the Daesh expansion—the Islamist Dawn coalition and the more moderate Dignity coalition provide a natural environment conducive to broad social and economic changes that the Islamic State is exploiting. Daesh in Libya is borrowing a page from the their expansion playbook in northern and western Iraq. They are trying to duplicate their recipe for success. The Gaddafi regime overthrow expanded the window of political opportunity to accommodate Daesh. It also removed any barrier present in the form of political repression.

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<sup>153</sup> Piven and Cloward, *Poor People’s Movements*, 4.

<sup>154</sup> Ibid.

<sup>155</sup> McAdam, *Political Process*.

## F. CONCLUSION

Currently, the only serious barrier to Daesh expansion comes in the form of other Al-Qaeda linked jihadist groups like Ansar al-Sharia or the Mujahedeen Shura Council in Derna. Daesh's indigenous organizational strength lies in its Libyan fighters who traveled to Syria and returned to Libya for their second Jihad. Still, it does not enjoy the same level of indigenous support as other jihadist organizations like Ansar al-Sharia (Benghazi). Part of Daesh's setback in Derna was attributed to their demand for widows to marry Daesh mujahedeen deployed in the city.<sup>156</sup> Ostensibly, this was a move to shore up indigenous organizational strength. Finally, cognitive liberation allows the Islamic State to ascend to dominance in selected areas. In Derna, this was a double-edged sword that came back to haunt them when the Shura Council mobilized to remove Daesh's grip on the city center.<sup>157</sup> The Islamic States leader in Derna, Wissam Abdu Zaid al-Zubaidi, allegedly was paraded naked through the streets of Derna *Game of Thrones* style before being executed.<sup>158</sup><sup>159</sup>

Daesh's days in Libya may be numbered. The United Nations representative has reached a consensus between the rival factions in governance for a power sharing agreement between them.<sup>160</sup> There is little doubt that hardline jihadists like the Daesh and al-Qaeda will disregard any such agreement and continue fighting. But this recognition of a single government can only work to narrow the window for political opportunity and reduce broad socio-

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<sup>156</sup> Farrah Schennib\*, "The Islamic State Diary: A Chronicle of Life in Libyan Purgatory," *Spiegel Online*, September 4, 2015, <http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/the-islamic-state-diary-a-chronical-of-life-in-libyan-purgatory-a-1051422.html>. \*Authors pseudonym or cover name.

<sup>157</sup> Ibid.

<sup>158</sup> Shane Harris and Nancy A. Youssef, "Town Shames ISIS Chief 'Cersei Lannister-Style'—and Then Executes Him," *Daily Beast*, July 19, 2015, <http://www.thedailybeast.com/articles/2015/07/19/town-shames-isis-chief-cersei-lannister-style-and-then-executes-him.html>.

<sup>159</sup> It is not really clear if this actually happened to Zubaidi. The Pentagon announced he was targeted in an airstrike on 12 November 2015.

<sup>160</sup> Rami Musa, "UN Libya Envoy Says Rival Governments Reach Consensus," *Boston Globe*, September 14, 2015, <https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/world/2015/09/13/libya-envoy-says-rival-governments-reach-consensus/WO0vxAbvLW7SLf3JwwaioO/story.html>.



economic factors that the jihadists are exploiting. Any political consensus between the different factions will require brokerage to achieve. In the next chapter I will map jihadist networks, their ties to each other, and other segments of the Libyan population. Key brokers active in the Libyan jihadist movement will be identified and their ties illuminated.

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## IV. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

### A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter visualizes, describes, and analyzes jihadist networks located in eastern Libya—further, it examines how jihadist networks relate to each other and other networks. It will also explore the relationship between these networks and the fight for supremacy against other government-aligned groups and the Libyan National Government itself.

This chapter examines networks in the coastal cities of Derna and Benghazi. Initially, it intended to only examine the movement of foreign fighters out of Libya and into Syria and Iraq, but August 2014 news reports indicated that the Daesh was attempting to branch out and establish formal governance in Derna Libya. A few months earlier, former Libyan Army General, Kalifa Haftar, began a military campaign against the hardline Islamist militia groups in eastern Libya.<sup>161</sup> Thus, it is appropriate to extend this study to include jihadist networks beyond foreign fighter movement to examine and understand the dynamics at play in Libya.

### B. METHODOLOGY

The following criteria are used to define this network's boundaries: 1) Individuals are identified in open source news and social media providing a documented connection or tie with another individual or a connection with a jihadist network in Libya; 2) Ties are not limited to jihadist networks. For example, tribal ties or business connections are also included; and 3) Organizations must be active in Libya or directly tied to someone there. If an individual has a tie with an individual or network outside Libya, it was recorded, but only direct

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<sup>161</sup> Johanna Karadsheh and Ashley Fantz, "Turmoil in Libya, Fighting Sweeps across Tripoli following Benghazi Violence," *CNN*, last modified May 19, 2014, <http://edition.cnn.com/2014/05/18/world/africa/libya-violence/>.

connections were used.<sup>162</sup> For example, Abu Nabil (Libya) has a direct link to Baghdadi (Syria). Baghdadi's other ties in Iraq or Syria are not recorded. The ties used between individuals are: colleague, kinship, communication, and superior subordinate. A total of 285 individual (agents) were recorded. A second tie is recorded to show an individual's connection to a group or network. The organizational nodes and corresponding numbers of sub-categories are: academic organizations (1), businesses (7), government organizations (7), military organizations (5), political movements (3), religious organizations (6), jihadist organizations (18), and tribes (25). To narrow the scope, the social network analysis portion is subdivided into three networks: Daesh, other jihadist, and non-jihadist networks.<sup>163</sup>

To further highlight how the three networks relate to each other a boundary spanner potential analysis is run to identify key actors who occupy positions of brokerage within the networks.<sup>164</sup> "Brokerage and brokerage potential provides analysts a better understanding of a network's inner workings, its foundational structure, and its critical facilitating nodes. In a sense, it is these nodes, and their associated strong and weak ties, that serve as the skeletal frame responsible for holding the network together."<sup>165</sup> Brokerage is more than the inner workings of a network. "Bridges, brokers and boundary spanners facilitate transactions and the flow of information between people or groups separated or hindered by some gap or barrier. This may be a physical gap such as geographic location, cognitive or cultural gap such as differing disciplines or

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<sup>162</sup> Relationship information is recoded in a CSV spreadsheet developed by Doowan Lee and Daniel Cunningham for a directed study conducted at the Naval Post Graduate School. The spreadsheet provides information on where the data was sourced and a hyperlink (if available) to the website. Each attribute that contained relevant data was uploaded into an ORA metafile. Attributes that lack data were ignored.

<sup>163</sup> Other jihadist networks includes al-Qaeda and their official branches.

<sup>164</sup> Boundary spanner potential is determined by dividing normalized betweenness centrality by normalized degree centrality.

<sup>165</sup> Derek J. Raymond, "Combatting Daesh: A Socially Unconventional Strategy" (master's thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015).

professions or alternatively, the gap may be that members of one party have no basis on which to trust the other.”<sup>166</sup>

### C. OVERALL NETWORK

Figure 1 presents the overall network. It is presented as a multi-modal network showing the individuals (round nodes) and their ties to each other and various organizations (square nodes). The individuals and their respective organizations are color-coded: (1) red for other jihadist organizations, (2) black for Daesh, and (3) green for non-jihadist. Studying this network is akin to looking back in time. It was not unusual to discover a new individual or tie only after he was eulogized following his death.

Within the network, Daesh’s linkages to other organizations are limited when compared to the other jihadist networks. Only four ties are observed between Daesh and non-jihadist organizations. Conversely, there are dozens links for the other jihadist networks. Of note, there are fourteen pathways running between the Daesh network and the other jihadist networks. This reflects the fact that as in Syria and other places, Daesh seeks to recruit or co-opt other jihadist networks and individuals to their cause.<sup>167</sup> The red network depicted in Figure 1 is actually a conglomeration of networks consisting of several jihadist organizations.<sup>168</sup> Principal groups comprising the red network are Ansar al-Sharia, Libyan Islamic Fighting Group, February 17th Brigade, Mujahedeen Shura Council Derna, and the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council. The red network has two unifying characteristics. First, they are opposed to the Dignity government in Tobruk and its military leader Kalifa Haftar. Second, they are opposed to Daesh. However, as in the Syrian conflict these groups appear

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<sup>166</sup> Janet C. Long, Frances C. Cunningham, and Jeffrey Braithwaite, “Bridges, Brokers and Boundary Spanners in Collaborative Networks: A Systematic Review,” *BMC Health Services Research* 13, no. 158 (April 2013): 1–13, doi: 10.1186/1472-6963-13-158.

<sup>167</sup> “The Islamic State,” Stanford University, last updated May 15, 2015, <https://web.stanford.edu/group/mappingmilitants/cgi-bin/groups/view/1#note221>.

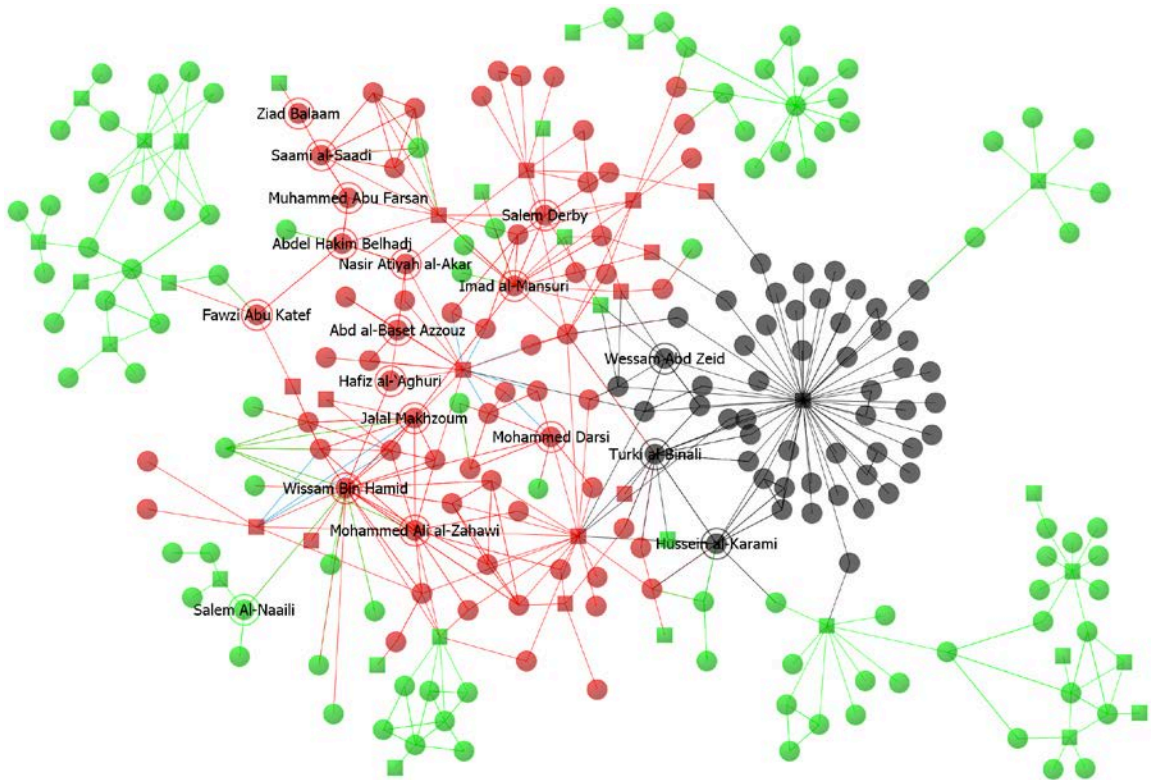
<sup>168</sup> Some individuals in these networks may have documented ties to al-Qaeda those ties are recorded on an individual basis.

pragmatic when seeking tactical gains. In Derna the Mujahedeen Shura Council will tolerate a level of cooperation with the Dignity forces against Daesh. While in Benghazi, Ansar al-Sharia will collaborate with Daesh against Dignity.<sup>169</sup> This variable cooperation indicates existing dynamic brokerage occurring between different networks. Table 1 shows the top boundary spanner potential scores for the 16 actors who played a role in Libya. Daesh occupies three of the bottom four positions. The individuals from Table 1 are highlighted showing their positions with in the network.

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<sup>169</sup> Thomas Joscelyn, "Ansar Al Sharia Libya Fights on under New Leader | The Long War Journal," *Long War Journal*, June 30, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/06/ansar-al-sharia-libya-fights-on-under-new-leader.php>.

Figure 1. Jihadist Network Ties



**Legend**

- Daesh agent
- Other jihadist agent
- Non jihadist agent
- Daesh network
- Other jihadist organizations
- Non jihadist organizations

Table 1. Jihadist Brokerage Scores

Name	Jihadist Network	Boundary Spanner Potential
Hafiz al-‘Aghuri	Other Jihadist	0.1544
Abd al-Baset Azzouz	Other Jihadist	0.0812
Jalal Makhzoum	Other Jihadist	0.0609
Nasir Atiyah al-Akar	Other Jihadist	0.0604
Mohammed Darsi	Other Jihadist	0.0454
Imad al-Mansuri	Other Jihadist	0.0381
Abdel Hakim Belhadj	Other Jihadist	0.0449
Wissam Bin Hamid	Other Jihadist	0.0435
Muhammed Abu Farsan	Other Jihadist	0.0396
Imad al-Mansuri	Other Jihadist	0.0381
Salem Derby	Other Jihadist	0.0318
Salem Al-Naaili	Non Jihadist	0.0261
Turki al-Binali	Daesh	0.0236
Wessam Abd Zeid (Abu Nabil al-Anbari)	Daesh	0.0174
Zaid Balaam	Other Jihadist	0.0156
Hussein al-Karami	Daesh	0.0153



## D. ANALYSIS OF OTHER JIHADIST NETWORKS

The red network comprises the other jihadists in eastern Libya. As previously mentioned, the multi-party jihadist network appears much more developed in terms of the complexity of its structure and ties to other non-jihadist networks. This is partially a result of the greater time that these networks have had to develop. Many of the red jihadist groups date back to the start of the Libyan civil war, in which their leaders played a significant role and received a greater proportion of media coverage when compared to the recent arrival of Daesh.<sup>170</sup> Another group, the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group can trace their roots back to the Afghan Jihad.<sup>171</sup> Second, those occupying positions of brokerage in this network are exclusively Libyan. This means that there are greater opportunities for those jihadists to participate in the Libyan body politic and Libyan society writ large. I have included brief profiles of the top three individuals in the network and enlarged diagrams highlighting their relative positions. Finally, I have included other individuals not based their scores but on the uniqueness of their ties. For example, ties to brokers and networks in other locations, civil institutions, banks, charities, tribal affiliations, and other elements of Libyan society. The descriptions will focus on these ties and how they can enhance brokerage potential.

### 1. Hafiz al-'Aghuri

Hafiz al-'Aghuri is an al-Qaeda aligned jihadist who has close ties to Wissam Bin Hamid and Abd al-Baset Azzouz.<sup>172</sup> His position in the network (see Figure 1) spans these two high-scoring individuals and results in his subsequent highest score.<sup>173</sup> Additionally, Aghuri is a member of the member Zawiya

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<sup>170</sup> Christopher S. Chivvis and Jeffrey Martini, *Libya after Qaddafi: Lessons and Implications for the Future* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2014), [http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research\\_reports/RR500/RR577/RAND\\_RR577.pdf](http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR500/RR577/RAND_RR577.pdf).

<sup>171</sup> Ibid.

<sup>172</sup> Federal Research Division, *Al-Qaeda in Libya*.

<sup>173</sup> Aghuri has the highest score relative only to other jihadists.

tribe.<sup>174</sup> This Arab tribe found in Benghazi and further to the south in Kufra. It has long running conflict with the African Tabu tribe.<sup>175</sup> The Zawiya tribe has connections to smuggling routes and oil resources through al-Kufra.<sup>176</sup> Aghuri could be a position to broker his Zawaya tribal connections in support of the larger jihadist cause.

## 2. Abd al-Baset Azzouz

Abd al-Baset Azzouz is an al-Qaeda-aligned jihadist who was sent home to Libya by Ayman al-Zawahiri to establish al-Qaeda's network in Libya.<sup>177</sup> Azzouz's direct ties to al-Qaeda aligned Hafiz al-'Aghuri and Nasir Atiyah al-Akar solidified his position within AQ's fledgling network development. Azzouz used his connections to plan and execute the attack on the Benghazi consulate.<sup>178</sup> Azzouz also set up a training camp around the city of Derna.<sup>179</sup> Azzouz was in a position to broker jihadist efforts between Benghazi groups and Derna. However, his capture in 2014 could temporarily hinder cooperation between their respective networks.<sup>180</sup>

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<sup>174</sup> Frederic Wehrey, "Ending Libya's Civil War: Reconciling Politics, Rebuilding Security," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 24, 2014, <http://carnegieendowment.org/2014/09/24/ending-libya-s-civil-war-reconciling-politics-rebuilding-security>.

<sup>175</sup> "Killings in Kufra Raise Questions about Sudanese Involvement," *Libya's Channel*, September 27, 2015, <http://en.libyaschannel.com/2015/09/27/killings-in-kufra-raise-questions-about-sudanese-involvement/>.

<sup>176</sup> Courage Services Inc., "Major Tribal Groups of Libya" (unpublished), Central Intelligence Agency, 2013.

<sup>177</sup> Federal Research Division, *Al-Qaeda in Libya*.

<sup>178</sup> Department of Defense, "Brigades of the Captive Omar Abdul Rahman Claim Responsibility for Attack on Benghazi, Libya" (declassified intelligence report), September 16, 2012, <http://www.judicialwatch.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Pgs.-394-398-396-from-JW-v-DOD-and-State-14-812-DOD-Release-2015-04-10-final-version2.pdf>.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid.

<sup>180</sup> Thomas Joscelyn, "Representative of Ayman Al Zawahiri Reportedly Captured in Turkey," *Long War Journal*, December 7, 2014, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/representative\\_of\\_ay.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/representative_of_ay.php).

### 3. Jalal Makhzoum

Jalal Makhzoum is the leader of the Rafallah al-Sahati Brigade. The group operates primarily in Benghazi and is a part of the Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council (BRSC).<sup>181</sup> BRSC is a coalition of jihadist militias opposed to Khalifa Haftar and the Libyan National Army.<sup>182</sup> Makhzoum's position in the network is unique because of his connection with Derna-based Imad al-Mansuri. This tie may be of increased importance given the capture of Azzouz.

### 4. Imad al-Mansuri

Imad al-Mansuri is a resident of Derna whose ties to Syria and Iraq predate the Daesh expansion into his city.<sup>183</sup> His significance stems from the highest boundary spanner potential score in Derna. His active social media account on Twitter remained open until mid-September 2015.<sup>184</sup> A documented Facebook account is no longer available. He has four close relatives who have died fighting in Syria.<sup>185</sup> Mansuri shares sympathetic eulogies of martyred Ansar al-Sharia commander Mohammed al-Zawahri.<sup>186</sup> At the same time, he is also supportive of the Abu-Salim Martyrs Brigade. The Martyrs Brigade has refused to pledge allegiance to IS and been declared apostate by IS.<sup>187</sup>

Mansuri has also hosted gulf state tribal leaders Hamed Ayed al-Ajmi and Ali Hadi al-Hajr through his charity, Tajmaa al-Khair.<sup>188</sup> "Tajmaa al-Khair has

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<sup>181</sup> Navanti Group LLC, "Profile: The Benghazi Revolutionaries Shura Council," Native Prospector Report - LY-185, November 12, 2014, <https://www.opensource.gov>.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Navanti Group LLC, "Profile of Darnah Salafist Activist, Imad al-Mansuri," Native Prospector Report - LY-150, March 12, 2014, <https://www.opensource.gov>.

<sup>184</sup> Imad al-Mansuri, Twitter account, accessed September 23, 2015, <https://twitter.com/1780Emad>.

<sup>185</sup> Navanti Group, "Profile of Imad al-Mansuri."

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Mohamed Eljarh, "A Snapshot of the Islamic State's Libyan Stronghold," *Foreign Policy*, April 1, 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/04/01/a-snapshot-of-the-islamic-states-libyan-stronghold-derna-libya-isis/>.

<sup>188</sup> Navanti Group, "Profile of Imad al-Mansuri."

brought Islamist thinkers to Darnah to give lectures to local leaders and youth.”<sup>189</sup> His social media postings, combined with his charity, support a position of brokerage through his family connections to jihadist networks in Syria and with other jihadist ideologues in the region. Additionally, his relationship with local non-aligned jihadist groups like Abu Salim Martyrs Brigade and Ansar al-Sharia further his connections between these jihadist factions—and a broader audience in the region.

## 5. Mohammed al-Darsi

Mohammed al-Darsi is a Benghazi-based jihadist closely associated with Ansar al-Sharia.<sup>190</sup> He is a former detainee at Abu Salim prison in Libya. After his release from Libyan prison he went to join al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI).<sup>191</sup> He was selected to carry out a suicide attack against the Queen Alia airport in Jordan.<sup>192</sup> The plot was foiled and he was sentenced to life in prison.<sup>193</sup> In 2014, he was released and returned to Benghazi in exchange for kidnapped Jordanian ambassador Fawaz al-Itan.<sup>194</sup> He has connections back to an al-Qaeda in Iraq bomb maker and a recruiting network.<sup>195</sup> His calculated release and subsequent reappearance as a Libyan jihadist ostensibly reinforces Ansar al-Sharia’s linkages (brokerage) back to Syria and Iraq for the movement of fighters and material. His presence would also lend legitimacy to Ansar al-Sharia’s cause.

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<sup>189</sup> Navanti Group, “Profile of Imad al-Mansuri.”

<sup>190</sup> Thomas Joscelyn, “Ansar Al Sharia Libya Showcases Spoils of War, Key Personalities in Video,” *Long War Journal*, December 29, 2014, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/ansar\\_al\\_sharia\\_liby\\_1.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/12/ansar_al_sharia_liby_1.php).

<sup>191</sup> Michael Moss and Souad Mekhennet, “Militants Widen Reach as Terror Seeps out of Iraq,” *New York Times*, May 27, 2007, [http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/28/world/middleeast/28exodus.html?pagewanted=all&\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2007/05/28/world/middleeast/28exodus.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0).

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid.

<sup>194</sup> “Fighter Swapped for Abducted Envoy to Libya,” *Al Jazeera English*, May 13, 2014, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/middleeast/2014/05/jordan-kidnapped-envoy-libya-freed-201451345959878942.html>.

<sup>195</sup> Moss and Mekhennet, “Militants Widen Reach.”

Darsi is a close associate of Wissam Bin Hamid, who also claims to have fought in Iraq.<sup>196</sup>

## **6. Wissam Bin Hamid**

Wissam Bin Hamid's position in the network places him in a position of brokerage between Jalal Makhzoum's network and Mohammed al-Darsi's network. Bin Hamid is closely linked to the attack on the U.S. consulate in Benghazi, although he states that he did not actively participate in it.<sup>197</sup> Bin Hamid also has strong connections to al-Jalal in Benghazi. Jihadist factions under the BRSC provided a much-maligned security presence at the hospital, prompting the hospital administrators to reach out to both the local and the Tripoli-based Dawn government for help in convincing the jihadists to give up their "security posts" at the hospital.<sup>198</sup> The hospital itself as an excellent is an example of brokerage via an organization between jihadists and elements of Libyan government.

## **E. ANALYSIS OF DAESH IN LIBYA**

Daesh's network appears underdeveloped when compared to other jihadist networks. "The Islamic State's hierarchy inside Libya is murky."<sup>199</sup> While it was relatively easy to compile data on the Daesh leadership, it was much more difficult to illuminate the underlying layers of subordinate relationships and ties to other facets of civil society. This gives the appearance of a less developed and interconnected hub-and-spoke design (see Figure 1). This murkiness is driven

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<sup>196</sup> Joscelyn, "Ansar Al Sharia Libya Showcases."

<sup>197</sup> Armin Rosen, "Here's the Biggest Issue the Benghazi Committee Didn't Ask Hillary Clinton about," *Business Insider*, October 25, 2015, <http://www.businessinsider.com/hillary-clinton-benghazi-testimony-militia-groups-2015-10>.

<sup>198</sup> Noora Ibrahim, "Benghazi Mediators Asked to Negotiate with Ansar Al-Sharia on Jalaa Hospital Issue" Open Source Center Report: IMN2014070228121547, *Libya Herald*, July 1, 2014, <http://www.libyaherald.com>.

<sup>199</sup> Thomas Joscelyn. "Al Qaeda-linked Jihadists Claim to Have Detained Islamic State Operative in Derna, Libya," *Long War Journal*, October 14, 2015, <http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/10/al-qaeda-linked-jihadists-claim-to-have-detained-islamic-state-operative-in-derna-libya.php>.

wholly by Daesh's need for operational security to guard against pressure from other jihadist networks and Haftar's Dignity forces.

Analysis for boundary spanner potential shows three key actors who occupy positions of brokerage between Daesh and the separate jihadist networks and in Sirte the connection to the Farjani tribe. Daesh naturally has ties outside of Libya via their brokers. Charlie Winter of the Quilliam Foundation stated with regard to Libyan themed propaganda "Among other things, their propaganda operations were almost entirely ceded over to the central IS propagandists." This is plainly evident in the content of its Libyan themed propaganda.<sup>200</sup> The visual imagery of orange jumpsuits, idyllic locations on Mediterranean beaches, and threats against western targets strike an all too familiar tone. Additionally, Daesh established media points in Derna (no longer operating) and Sirte.<sup>201</sup> Signage of these points is identical to other points in Iraq and Syria.<sup>202</sup> All of this indicates highly centralized control.

### 1. Turki al-Binali

In 2013 Baharani citizen Turki bin-Ali began visiting the Libyan City of Sirte.<sup>203</sup> Turki is one of the top religious figures in The Islamic State.<sup>204</sup> Turki has close connections with Baghdadi and wants to forge closer ties between militant groups in the cities of Darna, Sirte, Benghazi in the north, and the towns of

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<sup>200</sup> Erin Marie Saltman and Charlie Winter, *Islamic State: The Changing Face of Modern Jihadism* (N.p.: Quilliam, 2014), <http://www.quilliamfoundation.org/wp/wp-content/uploads/publications/free/islamic-state-the-changing-face-of-modern-jihadism.pdf>.

<sup>201</sup> Steven, Stalinsky, and R. Sosnow. "The Islamic State (ISIS) Establishes 'Media Points' In Syria, Iraq, Libya To Indoctrinate Caliphate Citizens And Enhance Its Cyber Activities On The Ground: A One-Year Review." *Jihad & Terrorism Threat Monitor*. October 1, 2015. Accessed November 29, 2015. <http://www.memrijttm.org/the-islamic-state-isis-establishes-media-points-in-syria-iraq-libya-to-indoctrinate-caliphate-citizens-and-enhance-its-cyber-activities-on-the-ground-a-one-year-review.html>.

<sup>202</sup> Ibid.

<sup>203</sup> Abd-al-Sattar Hatitah, "Al-Bin'ali Pushing to Expand Influence of DA'ISH in Libya Despite Increasing Obstacles on the Ground," trans. Open Source Center (LIN2015051127843177), *Al-Sharq al-Awsat Online*, May 11, 2015.

<sup>204</sup> Bassem Mroue, "Fiery Islamic State Group Cleric Gives Voice to Radicals," *Yahoo! News*, January 28, 2015, <http://news.yahoo.com/fiery-islamic-state-group-cleric-gives-voice-radicals-070138919.html>.

Sebha and Awbari in the south.<sup>205</sup> Turki's movements, residence, and operations when in Libya have been under the protection of various extremist groups.<sup>206</sup> A leading facilitator has been Jama'at al-Tawhid, a Sirte based group not associated with the Iraqi group of the same name.<sup>207</sup> The group's only referenced connection is back to Binali depicted in Figure 1 by the lone red square tied to him. They facilitated a tri-part meeting between Sufian bin-Qumu, Mokhtar Belmokhtar, and Turki.<sup>208</sup> Ostensibly, the goal was to facilitate closer cooperation, something Ali- has been pushing for in Libya.<sup>209</sup> Turki is also looking to close geographical gaps in Daesh's North African network with Boko Haram through a 48 year old Awbari based Malian known as Inthamadin al-Ansari, leader of pro Daesh group Nasar al-Haqq (Azwad Mali).<sup>210</sup>

Turki's ties to Daesh back in Iraq/Syria also run deep. His two brothers Ali and Muhammad have had their citizenship revoked by Bahrain.<sup>211</sup> They now manage a finance unit of Daesh.<sup>212</sup> Arguably, Turki has placed himself in a position of brokerage between the jihadist factions in Libya and is thus number one in terms of potential based on his position in the network.

## **2. Wissam Abed Zaid al-Zubeidi (Abu Nabil al-Anbari)**

Roughly six months prior to General Rodriguez's announcement of jihadist training camps in Libya Daesh leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi dispatched a trusted confidant, Salah al Din Governor Abu Nabil al-Anbari (real name Wissam Abed

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<sup>205</sup> Hatitah, "Al-Bin'ali Pushing to Expand."

<sup>206</sup> Ibid.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid. Hatitah's reference to Jama'at al-Tawhid is not associated with the group active in Iraq circa 2006. The only name associated with the group is Binali.

<sup>208</sup> Ibid.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid.

Zaid al-Zubeidi).<sup>213</sup> Zubeidi, a former Baathist policeman spent time in U.S. custody at the Camp Bucca detention facility.<sup>214</sup> The former AQ operative led a detachment of returning Libyan jihadists to Derna.<sup>215</sup> Following the methods outlined in Christoph Reuter's *Speigel* article Anbari and his group forged alliances with groups in and around Derna.<sup>216</sup> Anbari also worked to set up criminal enterprises to finance efforts in Libya.<sup>217</sup> By December 2014, Daesh recruiters/facilitators in Turkey told their Libyan counterparts to stop sending fighters to Syria and instead focus on domestic attacks.<sup>218</sup> Within a few weeks IS began taking the cities of Nawfalya and Sirte.<sup>219</sup>

### 3. Hassan al-Karami

Karami is a Benghazi native in his early twenties.<sup>220</sup> He is the highest-ranking Libyan in the Daesh network. His father is a known Ansar al-Sharia financier who lost his electric business when that fact was revealed.<sup>221</sup> The younger Karami was also involved in Ansar al-Sharia. One can assume that he was a natural selection for this position in Daesh because of the brokerage he offers to other Benghazi based jihadists or those who are affiliated with Ansar al-Sharia. Karami spoke out on Libyan television condemning the capture of al-

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<sup>213</sup> Benoît Faucon and Matt Bradley, "Islamic State Gained Strength in Libya by Co-Opting Local Jihadists," *Wall Street Journal*, February 17, 2015, <http://www.wsj.com/articles/islamic-state-gained-strength-in-libya-by-co-opting-local-jihadists-1424217492>.

<sup>214</sup> Faucon and Bradley, "Islamic State Gained Strength."

<sup>215</sup> "Daesh Emir in Libya Is Dissident Iraqi Policeman and Companion of Baghdadi in Prison," *Al-Masalah News*, February 20, 2015, <http://almasalah.com/ar/NewsDetails.aspx?NewsID=47815>. Report in Arabic translated by Google Translate.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>217</sup> Kyle Orton, "The Islamic State, Libya, and Interventionism - The Eastern Project," *Medium* (blog), February 19, 2015, <https://medium.com/the-eastern-project/the-islamic-state-libya-and-interventionism-1c6359ed57d7#.9xs7kojn3>.

<sup>218</sup> Faucon and Bradley, "Islamic State Gained Strength."

<sup>219</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>220</sup> Callum Paton, "Isis in Libya: Who Is Hassan al-Karami the Spiritual Leader of Islamic State in Sirte," *International Business Times*, August 25, 2015, <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/isis-libya-who-hassan-al-karami-spiritual-leader-islamic-state-sirte-1517057>.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*



Qaeda operative Abu Anas al-Libi by American forces.<sup>222</sup> Statements of support like this, address Daesh's desire to win converts away from al-Qaeda. He speaks from a position of authority because of his family linkages to AQ aligned Ansar al-Sharia.<sup>223</sup>

Karami's brokerage potential is also illustrated in Daesh's linkages to Libyan tribal elements. This is one of the Daesh linkages outside of jihadist networks I have been able to illuminate. It is alleged that he met with a leader of the Farjan tribe to broker a deal in the area of Sirte.<sup>224</sup> Daesh in Sirte also counts a Farjani tribal member as one of its commanders.<sup>225</sup> Additionally, Daesh ruthlessly suppressed a Farjani tribal uprising in Sirte sparked by the killing of salafist imam Sheikh Khalid Ben Rajah. Rajah refused to accommodate Daesh influence in Farjani dominated mosques, leading to the revolt.<sup>226</sup> The linkages via the Farjani tribe include Kalifa Haftar and the House of Representatives based in Tobruk. In the next chapter, I will discuss how this analysis can be used to develop counter-Jihadist strategies.

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<sup>222</sup> Daniele Raineri, Twitter Post, November 26, 2015, 3:49 AM, <https://twitter.com/DanieleRaineri/status/669845377449873408>. Raineri is a respected journalist and known Libya watcher on Twitter.

<sup>223</sup> Paton, "Isis in Libya."

<sup>224</sup> Marco Arnaboldi, Twitter Post, September 26, 2015, 1:21 PM, [https://twitter.com/marco\\_arnaboldi/status/647863693636698113](https://twitter.com/marco_arnaboldi/status/647863693636698113).

<sup>225</sup> Ahmed Mamdouh, "IS in Libya Demands Misrata's Militants to Pledge Their Allegiance for Al-Baghdadi," *Al Bawaba News*, February 21, 2015, <http://www.albawabaeg.com/50981>.

<sup>226</sup> Imam Rajah name has also been spelled Khaled Ferjani.

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## V. CONCLUSION

The prospect of Daesh's further expansion in Libya is not particularly bright, given its relative brokerage deficit compared to the other jihadist factions. Based only on the brokerage score it appears al-Qaeda and the other jihadist factions enjoy a significant advantage over Daesh.<sup>227</sup> Daesh's brokerage deficit may be due to its lack of native Libyans within the brokerage network. Eastern Libya is especially distrustful of outsiders, given their history.<sup>228</sup> Hussein al-Karami is Daesh's highest-ranking Libyan broker. He is ranked last. This lack of indigenous organizational strength identified as a potential shortfall in Chapter III here it is empirically demonstrated.

Whereas Daesh's lack of relative brokerage is a weakness, the other jihadist groups can rely on this to mount a united resistance to both Daesh and the Tobruk-based Dignity government. This is an aspect that al-Qaeda has no doubt been exploiting. The top two brokers in Libya are both documented al-Qaeda operatives. Other AQ-aligned operatives, like Sufian Bin Qumu and Muhammed al-Darsi, remain active in Libya.<sup>229</sup> Their individual affiliations will likely taint any revolutionary movements they find themselves leading. It would be inaccurate to say that all jihadist factions in Libya subscribe al-Qaeda's global Salafi jihadist ideology. But, it is not unreasonable to say there are individuals in these networks who subscribe to this ideology. The challenge will come in identifying those actors and undermining their authority and degrading their capability.

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<sup>227</sup> Daesh's most influential individual in terms of brokerage is Turki al-Binali with a relative score of 0.0236. Comparatively, Hafiz al-'Aghuri's score is over six times higher at 0.1544.

<sup>228</sup> A documented resistance to outside influence and control from Italian colonialism and King Idris's ouster because of his ties to the west.

<sup>229</sup> Thomas Jocelyn, "US Captures Benghazi Suspect, but Most Attackers Remain Free," *Long War Journal*, June 18, 2014, [http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/us\\_captures\\_benghazi.php](http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2014/06/us_captures_benghazi.php).

One aspect both red and black networks share are broker ties to the green non-jihadist networks.<sup>230</sup> The most common type of ties is with hospitals and tribes. Wissam Bin Hamid, Hafiz al-'Aghuri, Turki al-Binali, and Wessam Abd Zeid are all influential brokers with ties to non-jihadist networks. Brokerage is occurring at these intersections to gain access to resources (medical treatment) and influence within Libyan tribal structures. Another tie from non-jihadist networks is Imad al-Mansuri's Tajmaa al-Khair foundation that includes ties to gulf state benefactors. It may be a stretch to say that Mansuri's charity is non-jihadist but it can still be classified as a conduit of brokerage in Derna.

With regard to a long-term political solution via a U.N-brokered unity government, any one that is formed will be forced to deal with jihadist factions because of the number of ties that they share with non-jihadist elements of Libyan society. Trying to form a government without acknowledging jihadist claims in Libya would only would continue exacerbating the underlying causes of civil strife in Libya. Those claims must either be addressed or the sources of those claims must be eliminated. As long as the conflict in Libya proliferates al-Qaeda and Daesh will continue to exploit weaknesses with the goal of exporting terrorism across North Africa and into Europe.

This thesis offers an explanation for why conditions in Libya have been conducive to the success of jihadist networks. In addition it also illuminates how Daesh is expanding in Libya. Ultimately the mapping of the human domain illustrates how the jihadists relate to each other and their environment in terms of brokerage potential. This thesis is far from an unabridged product. It does little to illuminate the underlying ties within Daesh's network, which makes it harder to develop strategies that would limit Daesh's brokerage. However, given the overall connectivity between non-Daesh Jihadist groups and other Libyan political groups, it is reasonable to assume that Daesh's expansion in Libya will face challenges.

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<sup>230</sup> Mapping non-jihadist networks was not the central focus of this study. Thus, those networks appear less developed and interconnected.

Daesh continually surprises its adversaries and rivals. Their expansion in Libya is no exception. In terms of countering non-Daesh Jihadist groups, more analysis is needed to map further ties Libyan non-jihadist networks, specifically ties within tribal and government networks. Mapping further non-Jihadist networks could prove useful to identify alternative nodes and pathways of political influence that can be utilized to counter key Jihadist groups. Future research should revolve around continued mapping of tribal and government ties. Those results could be used in brokering a unity government.

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