TRIBE, SECURITY, JUSTICE, AND PEACE IN LIBYA TODAY

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About the Report

This report examines the renewed role of tribes as
guarantors of social stability and providers of security
and justice services in Libya since the 2011 revolution.
Supported by the International Narcotics and Law
Enforcement Bureau of the U.S. Department of State, the
study is part of a portfolio of rule of law work carried out
by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) in Libya.
Report findings are based on qualitative field research
and a nationally representative survey carried out by USIP
in partnership with Altai Consulting. A companion report
discusses how political currents in Libya since 2011 have
shaped policing and security actors on the ground.

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[Since the revolution, tribes have asserted themselves within Libya's fractious security, justice, and peacemaking space. …As tribal involvement has grown, so has the impact of intertribal power dynamics.]

Map of Libyan Tribes

LIBYA

TUNISIA

LIBYA MAJOR COMMUNITIES

- Cities
- Small local tribes
- Al-Si'an
- Amazigh
- Warshfana
- Al-Nwail
- Al-Fawaqir
- Al-Awaqir
- Al-Ubaidat
- Tebu
- Tuareg
- Majabara
- Warfalla
- Firjan
- Awlad Sulaiman
- Al-Magharba
- Karaghala

Karaghala refers to a set of originally Turkic and Caucasian clans, descended in part from the Ottoman janissaries who founded outposts in Libya during the Ottoman empire, but who have long since intermarried into both Arab and native Libyan tribes. Despite this, shared family connections, outlook, and culture remain among many descendants of these clans, such that today, it is a recognizable part of Libya's social fabric.

Al-Fazzazna
Al-Fazzazna refers to a number of small clans who are descended from indigenous inhabitants and trading families in the area, sometimes intermarried with Arab nomadic tribes.

* Tripoli and Benghazi are mixed cities, and internal economic migration means that today, their inhabitants hail from across Libya. They are therefore not included on this map.

Tobruk
Al-Shahaibat
Al-Mnaffa
Al-Qut'ana
Al-Qunashat
Hubun

Derna
Al-Ubaidat
Al-Shawa'ir
Tawajir

Al-Baida
Bara'sa
Al-Hasa
Al-Awama
Al-Huta
Al-Dirsa
Al-Masamir

Al Marj
Al-Dirsa
Al-Masamir
Al-Abid
Al-Urfa
Al-Awama

Ajdabiya
Al-Fawaqir
Mahashish
Al-Magharba

Sirt
Qadhadfa
Awlad Shaikh
Az-Zyayna
Awlad Hamil
Wafi
Awlad Sulaiman

Waddan
Al-Ashraf
Rabah

Sabha
Awlad Bu Saif
Qadhadfa
Awlad Hadir
Al-Rabi'at
Awlad Sulaiman

Wadi Ash-Shati'
Al-Hasawna
Al-Magarha
Awlad Bu Saif
Al-Rabi'at

Misrata
Al-Ahali descendants
Al-Karaghala
Awlad al-Shaikh descendants

Tarhuna
Awlad Ma'raf
Awlad Muslim
Muzawagha
Muraghba

Gharyan
Bani Dawud Quarter
Bani Nasir Quarter
Bani Khalifa Quarter
Al-Qawasim Quarter

Bani Walid
Warfalla
(Sub-divisions:
Sa'dat, Jamamla,
Sabay', Faladna,
Al-Awatin)

Zintan
Awlad Bilhul
Awlad Dwaib

Tobruk
Derna
Luluq
Al-Quba
Al-Ubaidat
Al-Baida
Tukra
Al-Awaqir
Sultania
Abyar
Al-Fuwayha
Suluq
Quamins
Sultan
Al-Sit
Al-Majabara
Jalu
Awjila
Al-Awajala
Al-Marj
Benghazi*
Ajdabiya
Al-Fawaqir

Zwayya
Kufra
Ribyana
Tebu
Tazirbu

Karaghala
Warshfana
Amazigh
Tripoli*
Tajoura
Suq al-Jum'a
Al-Azziya
Al-Zawiya
Ajailat
Zuwara
Sabri
Al-Asab'a
Al-Awainia
Qal'a Zwala
Gharyan
Kikla
Yefren
Jadu
Badr
Kabaw
Nalut
Tiji
Timzin
Mashashia
Ruhaibat
Rujban
Al-Si'an
Al-Khwaib
Al-Nwail

Firjan
Warfalla
Sirt
Khoms
Msallata
Msrata
Tawergha
Waddan
Al-Hawana
Hun
Sawkna
Bani Walid
Birak
Sabha
Al-Fazzazna
Jirma
Awbari
Murzuq
Tmasseh
Umm al-Aranib
Tebu
Qutrun
Tuareg
Ghadames
Ghadamasiyya
Ghat

Summary

- Governance in Libya has long been influenced by tribal leaders alongside central authority. Tribalism and its meaning for Libyans, though, has evolved over the centuries, initially in response to outside powers and more recently to internal circumstances.

- The first efforts to extend central government authority, introduced during the Ottoman era, were continued through the Gadhafi era and fueled significant conflict between tribes.

- In the wake of the 2011 revolution that destroyed what little remained of state institutions, tribes and armed groups stepped in to fill the vacuum. This trend increased after the collapse of central state security in 2014.

- When tribal power structures are stable, they dominate policing and security services. When they are unstable, they lose control and sometimes rely on armed groups.

- Tribal influence over police is derived from the ability of tribes to staff local police structures and the need of the police to secure tribal permissions to act in tribal territories.

- Tribal influence over justice actors is more limited. Many cases, though, do not make it to court, either because they are resolved through tribal arbitration or because local instability prevents courts from operating.

- Libyans nonetheless overwhelmingly desire a security and justice system provided by the state and independent of tribal influence. Support for informal or nonstate justice systems is minimal. Nonetheless, a significant minority (in some areas majorities) see tribes as effective security providers, perhaps because state providers have not been effective.

- Reform efforts need to draw on tribal expertise and experience in peacemaking and negotiation, bearing in mind what modern tribalism means to Libyans.

Introduction

For much of its history, Libya has had either a weak or a nonexistent central government, and local governance outside administrative capitals has been handled largely by tribe or clan leaders known as *notables*—a term encompassing all manner of local dignitaries, including religious leaders, family elders, businesspeople, and others. The desert and coastal areas that make up the modern state have been treated as an independent state only relatively recently, since 1952. Before then, the vast expanse of Libya was governed by external actors—the Romans, Arab caliphates, the Ottoman caliphate, and finally the Italian occupation—able to impose only limited authority outside the coastal urban areas. The absence of centralized government was accentuated by the country's three regions—Tripolitania, Cyrenaica, and Fezzan—which were usually administered by separate governors as separate entities.[1] Those regions still manifest significant political and social differences.

Tribal culture—outside the native ethnic groups now known as the Amazigh (Berber), Tuareg, and Tebu—became dominated by an Arab social culture brought with successive waves of Arab Bedouin migrations.[2] Arab tribes conquered or displaced local and nomadic tribes but also gradually merged with them.[3] The genealogies of tribes became complex as different clans and bloodlines merged or diverged. In some areas, clans within the Arab tribes who claimed a purity of bloodline extending back to the Prophet and his companions (such tribes are known as the Sa'da) dominated tribes with mixed racial origin (known as Murabitin) through birthright or conquest.[4] Elsewhere, Arab Bedouin clans banded with non-Arab clans for protection and reinforced social pacts through marriage. In rural areas, this bonding process sometimes led to the group becoming a "tribe"—the Warfalla, for example. Similarly, in urban areas, trading families and residents bonded together to protect a city's interests against the (inevitably foreign) government of the day, creating a style of city-state and antigovernment politics that is evident even today.

The first sustained modern efforts to extend central government authority over local tribes came in the Ottoman era, when in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century the Qaramanli dynasty (1711–1835) attempted to conquer Libya's interior. The state later sought to extend the Ottoman *tanzimat* administrative reforms, raising levies and hiring tax collectors.[5] This assertion of state authority fueled significant conflict between tribes, depending on how they positioned themselves regarding the state. When the subsequent Italian colonization project sought to extend beyond its base in Tripoli, it too fomented significant armed resistance and intertribal fratricide.[6]

In the modern era, both King Idris (1951–1969) and Muammar Gadhafi (1969–2011) attempted to extend the authority of government over tribes in various ways, whether by building the state (Idris) or bypassing it to manipulate tribal interests directly (Gadhafi). Complicating matters, given that government and statebuilding were historically imposed from outside, whenever representatives of tribes and cities involved themselves in statebuilding or national politics, they tended to be dismissed by their tribes as pawns or self-interested servers of foreign projects or Gadhafi's regime.

The 2011 revolution damaged or destroyed what little remained of state institutions, many already hollowed from Gadhafi-era neglect, which triggered a vacuum of government authority, legitimacy, and security. Across the country, tribes and armed groups stepped in to fill the vacuum. Almost all Libyan families armed themselves and tribal communities became militarized. This trend increased following the collapse and polarization of central state security and justice institutions in 2014. At the same time, the nature and assertion of tribal authority

began to be challenged, particularly by religio-political networks, ranging from the Muslim Brotherhood to the more extreme Ansar al-Sharia and, recently, the Islamic State.

The extent to which tribal identity retains the ability to mobilize groups socially and politically in modern Libya is debated. Much anecdotal evidence suggests that tribes have reemerged and reinvented their role in the public sphere since the revolution, including in the domains of justice and security provision, conflict management, and conflict resolution. This report explores that supposition, analyzing what *tribe* means in postrevolution Libya; the impact of tribalism on security, justice, and peacemaking; and how Libyans perceive the role of tribe versus state in these areas. The report presents the results of a nationally representative survey of 979 Libyans conducted between January and August of 2015 and qualitative field research in the cities of Tobruk, Bani Walid, and Sabha. It presents the cities—each with very different tribal composition—as case studies through which to explore some of the variances and modalities of tribal influence. Unless otherwise cited, statements and conclusions in this report are drawn from fieldwork interviews and survey data.

Tribalism in Libya

Box 1. Key Takeaways

> Tribalism in Libya refers to modes of social organization by bloodline and by compacts between clans. These modes have evolved over the centuries.
>
> Tribalism has a political dimension in Libya that involves networks of local elites (notables) of the same tribal origin who share political objectives.
>
> The channels through which local elites exercised governance and conflict mediation were severely disrupted under Gadhafi, who empowered minorities and lower-status tribes over traditional elders from higher-status tribes.
>
> Tribe is a receding reality for the majority of Libyans; members of a tribe do not think or act the same way.

Discussions of *tribe* and *tribalism* in the Arab world often conjure notions of social organization based on bloodline or tradition.[7] At the simplest level, this definition holds true in Libya, but centuries of history have caused the characteristics of tribal society in Libya to evolve and mature in complex ways. Successive waves of migration of Arab and non-Arab tribes and clans have muddled ancestry over time, and families who connected through marriage, geography, and trade have also come to be viewed as new tribes, creating distinctions and hierarchies within and between tribes.[8] Additionally, although the word *tribe* has continued to be used to describe a group whose members share a bloodline reaching back generations, tribes have also evolved to become political actors.[9] For those tribes that emerged as politically influential, influence was channeled through leading members of that tribe, or *notables*.[10] For this reason, the word *tribe*, at least for the more politically significant tribes, has come to define a political entity consisting of a small network of leading notables at the head of tribes that, for reasons of history, have come to have a big say in local affairs. This political sense of the word has also been observed—wryly, by Libyans—to apply to townships, such as Misrata, which also act tribally in this way, even though they are not (wholly) descended from Arab Bedouin tribal societies and do not consider themselves to be a tribe.

The three case study areas in this report, for example, offer three different tribal, social, and political orders. In Tobruk, social order was built on military conquest and patronage; in Bani Walid, on social pacts between clans that later came to be regarded as tribes; and in Sabha, on a political confederation of nomadic Arab Bedouin tribes that at one point established a sultanate.

Historically, statebuilding efforts in Libya have met resistance from notables within the tribes, not least because Libya was governed by foreign powers for much of its history. Efforts by the state to build its presence and power led to what has been called a politics of notables in which the state had to work with and through prominent local leaders to achieve governance.[11] The fraught dialogue between tribes and state became especially volatile in the nineteenth century, when the Ottoman state's *tanzimat* reforms led it to try to systematically extend its reach into various regions of Libya to collect taxes, levy soldiers, control trade, and so forth. This entailed employing tax collectors, customs officials, garrison commanders, judges, and administrators. Ottoman governors were inevitably temporary, and thus depended on the political influence and support of prominent Libyan families. Notables sought to gain power either from employment with the state or sometimes by resisting it; the state required the co-option of those families, who had social power and could in theory persuade the population to accept the state's presence.[12] This practical emphasis on influence meant that such notables could emerge from any local group or actor with social capital or influence; in Ottoman society, such figures included ulema (religious scholars), muftis (legal scholars), heads of clans (*naqibs*), families with elite bloodlines, landowners, police chiefs, and garrison commanders, all of whom could nominate delegates (*nawwab*) in their stead.[13]

For this reason, the composition of notables has changed over time in step with regime changes and Libya's different statebuilding exercises. Notables still include *naqibs* and *na'ibs* (family representatives) from families with strong religious reputations or ancestral bloodlines. However, during the Gadhafi era, security brigades and military battalions replaced Ottoman-era garrisons, and today armed group commanders of all leanings have emerged as notables in many circumstances. The role of the traditional ulema and mufti class has become somewhat sidelined by other religious trends but is still considered important. Retired state officials and bureaucrats, diaspora Libyans, businesspersons, philanthropists, professionals, scholars, and technical experts can also be called on to step up as noteworthy persons in their own right, again according to circumstance.[14] However, when tribal affairs are at stake—for example, in disputes over land or grazing rights, or in the negotiation of peace accords between neighbors—the heritage embodied in particular families and clan heads is respected and their views must, to a large extent, be accommodated even where the views of professionals and experts within the tribe may differ.

This uneasy relationship between state authority and independent local authorities with de facto power has survived in a modified way. It explains in large part why local Libyan leaderships want state security services but also to dominate or control those services. Through history, tribal notables have used state structures to develop and extend their social status and influence; for its part, to extend its reach, the central administration in Tripoli allowed those notables to do so. The system survived until the independence of Libya and the reign of Idris, who allowed tribal allies to dominate the independent state's new policing and military sectors.[15]

Gadhafi's ascent to power disrupted this state of affairs. During his first years in power, Gadhafi made systematic attempts to undo the power of local notables. Omar El Fathaly and Monte Palmer, who conducted field research in rural Libya in the early 1970s, charted Gadhafi's "dismissal of all local officials including governors, mayors, and deputy mayors, most of whom had been tribal sheikhs or their relatives; and replacement by a new class of local

Local Libyan leaderships want state security services but also to dominate or control those services.

administrators whose values and social origins were compatible with those of the RCC [the Revolutionary Command Council], that is, educated members of less prestigious tribes with no ties to the old elite structure."[16] Despite his revolutionary zeal, Gadhafi's efforts were frequently frustrated in these early years.[17]

Such efforts were intensified during the so-called Green Book phase of the 1970s, which saw the regime take more sweeping measures to reorder society into an idealized "state of the masses" (*jamahiriya*), which involved trying to eliminate tribal interests altogether.[18] The policy was enforced by newly created Revolutionary Committees at great human cost, and involved forced nationalization of property and state-sponsored trade union movements in the 1980s.[19] Preoccupied with the possibility of internal disunion, Gadhafi condemned tribalism as incompatible with his notion of a *jamahiriya* based on direct political participation. But when the regime tried to remove tribal leaders and replace them with political figures loyal to the *jamahiriya*, these loyalists often turned out to be simply members of other tribes and clans disfavored by the previous order.[20] The replacement of old notable elites with members of less prestigious tribes echoed a revolutionary class warfare, but in practice simply replaced one tribal hierarchy with another.[21]

By the 1990s, Gadhafi's policies and restructuring of local governance demonstrated a recognition that his revolutionary state, far from eliminating the power of tribes, had simply reconfigured it. Following an attempted military coup against the regime in 1993 in which families of one tribe, the Warfalla, played a key role, Gadhafi revived an ideological and ideologized form of tribalism in his public discourse.[22] "In its rehabilitated incarnation, tribalism was mixed extensively with nationalistic discourse, [meaning that] Gadhafi encouraged tribal leaders to denounce fellow tribesmen whose political ideas clashed with his national Jamahiriya project."[23] The creation of Popular Social Leadership Committees in 1994 was a particularly insidious mechanism by which those same disfavored families and individuals were awarded a nebulous position as a coordinator (*munassiq*) for their particular clan. This entailed sweeping authority—including the right to have homes bulldozed and to regulate state utilities and services—typically used to cow and control notable families.[24] Sometimes tribes resisted this attempt to merge a tribal ethos with the national agenda.[25] Again, though, Gadhafi's empowerment of those who were marginalized under traditional tribal structures overcame any such resistance. By installing *munassiq* within the fabric of tribe and family, the Gadhafi regime dictated the nature of intertribal alliances and imposed itself as the sole mediator in intertribal and intercommunal disputes. State security and intelligence apparatus officials also replaced tribesmen as mediators between different components of society. In short, under Gadhafi, tribal leadership, discourse, and influence mechanisms were heavily policed and politicized.

Relevance

Tribalism, as a way of political organization within and against the state, still exists in Libya. However, the counterforces of urbanization, globalization, population growth, and regional-level political and religious movements have considerably diminished tribal notables' reach both across the country and among younger members of the tribe. Most Libyans are under thirty-five, and more than half the population live in the tribally mixed cities of Tripoli and Benghazi. Many have either lived or studied abroad at some point, or encountered anti-tribal ideologies such as Salafism and political Islam, which further distance them from tribal networks. The survey data presented in this section demonstrates that, although powerful networks of leading notables at

the heads of tribes remain influential in Libyan politics, security, justice, and peacemaking, most Libyans have a very remote connection to these activities and feel little association with tribe in their daily lives.

The word *tribe* still carries a sense of bloodline and heritage. The survey portion of this study polled respondents on their understanding of the concept of the tribe and its place in Libyan society, and found that 53 percent of the 979 respondents understood members of a tribe to be "tied to each other by blood links." A further 23 percent gave a more nuanced response, namely, that members of a tribe "refer to one ancestor, but are not always tied by blood links." As noted, different models of tribe exist in Libya, some that have a common ancestry and some that do not, and the exact genealogy of tribal lineage is complicated by various social pacts, intermarriages, and migrations. Nonetheless, in all cases, genealogy is a significant part of how Libyans understand tribal "membership."

Respondents, however, reported that little else other than genealogy connected tribes (see figure 1). Only one in ten respondents reported that members of the same tribe "take up arms together when the tribe is threatened" or "have the same cultural or behavioral codes." Additionally, only tiny percentages—2 and 3 percent, respectively—reported that members of a tribe shared economic or political interests.[26]

Figure 1. Which of the following statements do you identify with most? (n=979)

Members of one tribe…
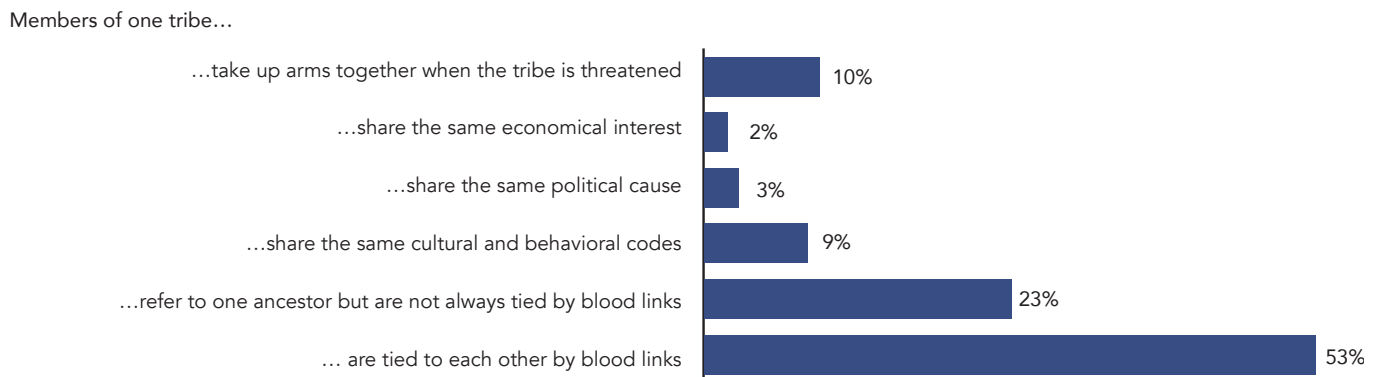
Further evidence that the concept of tribe carries strong genealogical but marginal political significance is found in other survey data. Libyans reported stronger links to their country and to their family than to their tribe, even though most do identify with a particular tribe (see figures 2 and 3). Tribal identity is somewhat stronger in the east and the southwest, where tribes have historically played a stronger role in governance and dispute resolution, than in the west.

Figure 2. Among the following groups, to which do you identify the most? (n=979, by region)
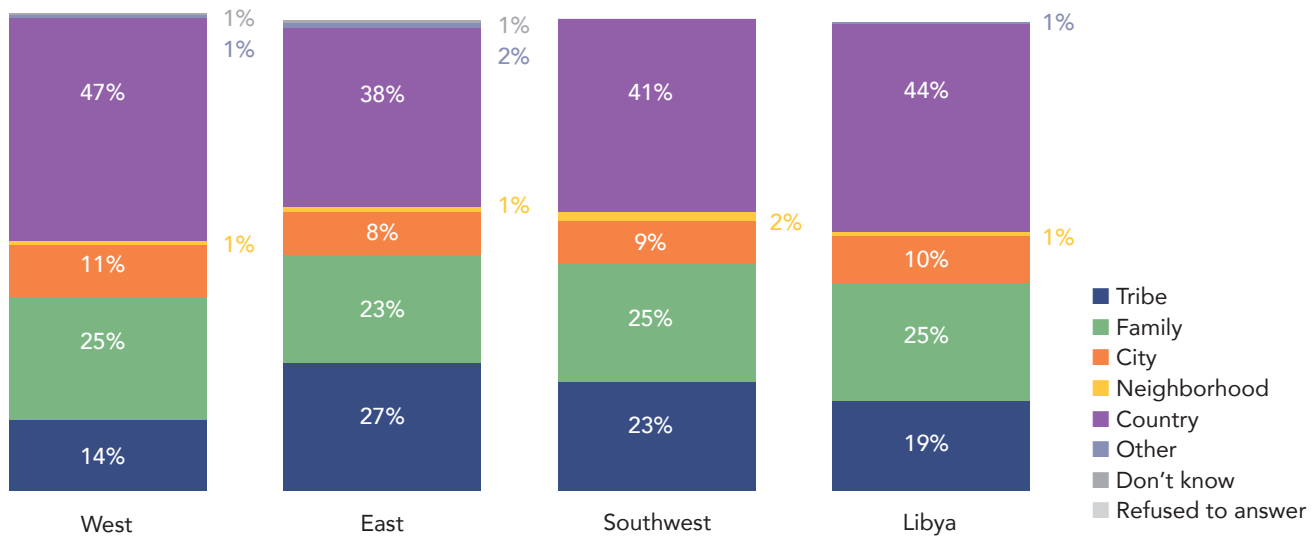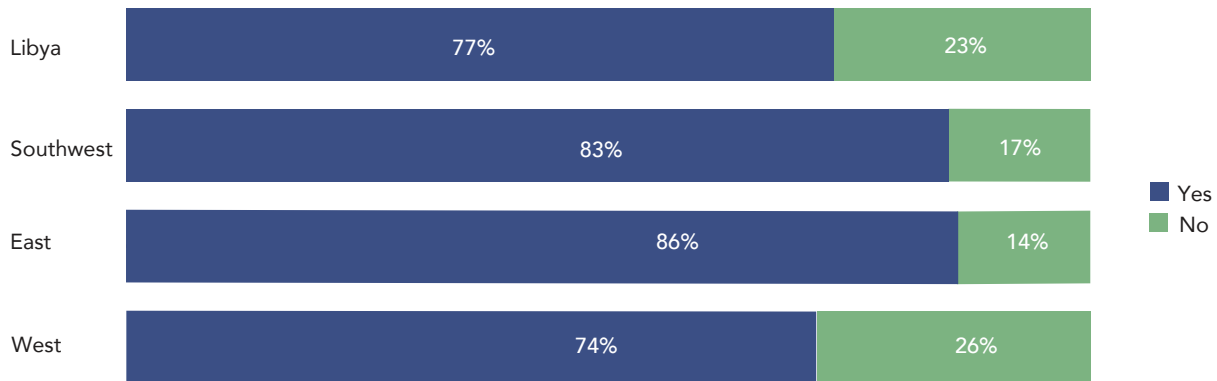

Figure 3. Do you identify with one particular tribe? (n=979, by region)

To conclude, the survey results reinforce the two conclusions drawn from historical scholarship and qualitative analysis: one, that tribe is a politically relevant concept insofar as it is employed by small elite networks of politicians, military leaders, and local family heads as an organizing principle when engaging in political and security matters; and two, that, almost paradoxically, it is exceedingly remote from most Libyans' lives.

Some academics, particularly in Libya, have tried to explain why notables play political and security roles that are outsized in relation to the number of Libyans with strong tribal identities. In the 1990s, the Benghazi public intellectual Faraj Najem presented the genealogies of Libyan tribes for a modern audience in a thesis dissertation, referring to a variety of genealogical studies conducted by Arab authors as well as those done by Italian orientalists in the early

twentieth century.[27] Political scientist Amal Obeidi noted that tribal solidarity is not static and that Libyans who self-identify as tribal in fact use tribal connections only out of practical necessity and theoretically are willing to drop tribal identification and to consider themselves only as Libyans. Her reading of tribalism was as a practical attempt to create civil society in a country that, given the nature of its governments, had never had one.[28]

Obeidi's explanation comes close to the conclusions of this report's surveying, but the use of the term *civil society* is arguably overestimating the visibility and presence of tribes. Other anthropologists cite anecdotal evidence that many Libyans do not know who notables are or how to access them, and that full understanding of where points of influence and access within a tribe lie is far from commonplace. The scholar and anthropologist Igor Cherstich notes, "In my fieldwork experiences I have never met a Libyan who knew the identity of his tribal head. Many of my informants, even those who were very proud of their tribal identity, would inquire about the identity of their leaders only in situations that required their help or mediation."[29] Survey data from this study reinforces this conclusion. In the east, only 22 percent of respondents said they had met with a tribal leader or elder within the previous twelve months; in the west, only 9 perc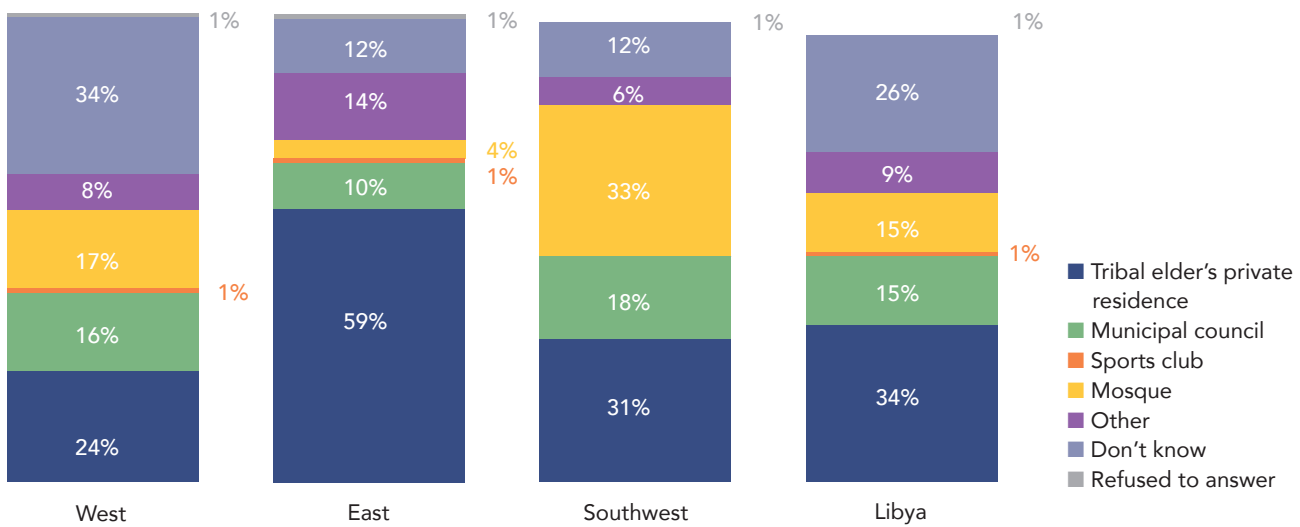ent; and in the southwest, only 14 percent (see figure 4). Far from being a stand-in for civil society, tribes seem to be somewhat more akin to an emergency insurance policy and mediation service in the eyes of many Libyans.

Far from being a stand-in for civil society, tribes seem to be somewhat more akin to an emergency insurance policy and mediation service in the eyes of many Libyans.

Figure 4. Have you met with a tribal elder over the past twelve months? (n=979)
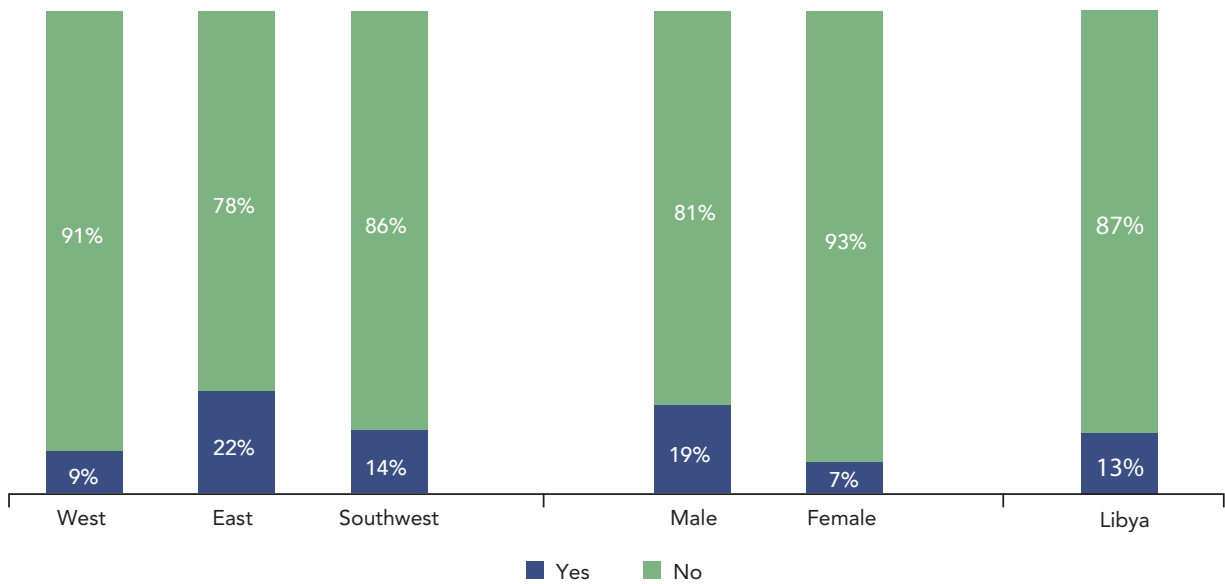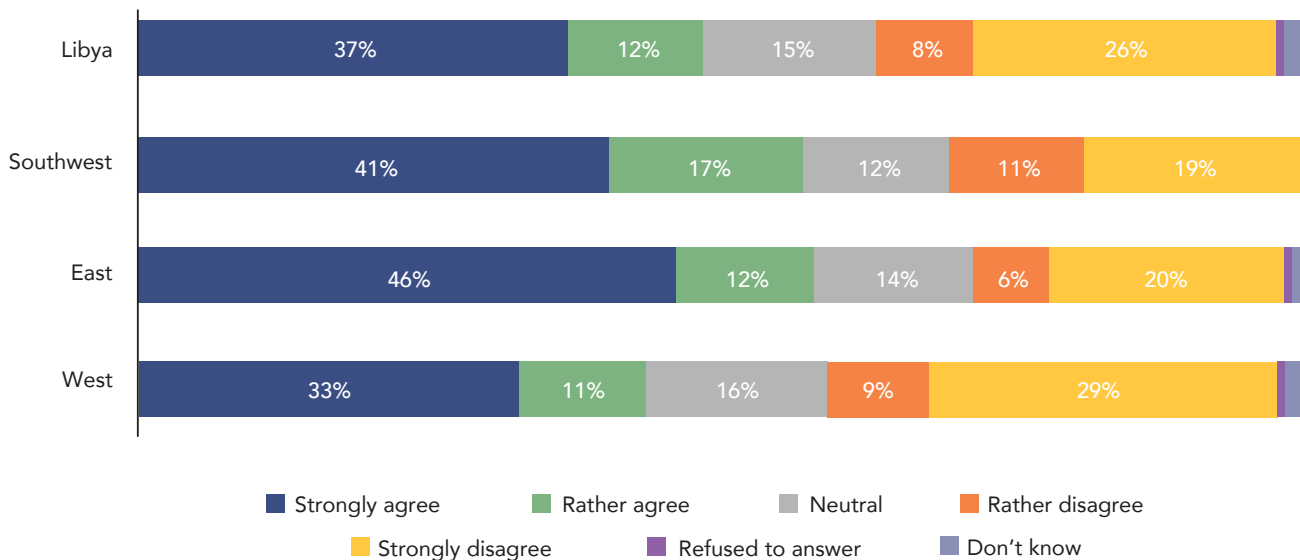

Finally, it is not surprising, given these findings, that respondents were divided on whether tribes were "a source of pride" for Libyans. Slightly more than half agreed that tribal identity was a source of pride and 26 percent strongly disagreed (see figure 6). Part of the explanation for such mixed feelings is likely to be tribes' mixed record on promoting stability and providing security and justice, which are discussed in the following section.

Figure 5. Where do you usually meet with tribal elders? (n=979)

Legend:
- Tribal elder's private residence
- Municipal council
- Sports club
- Mosque
- Other
- Don't know
- Refused to answer

West: Tribal elder's private residence 24%, Municipal council 16%, Sports club 1%, Mosque 17%, Other 8%, Don't know 34%, Refused to answer 1%

East: Tribal elder's private residence 59%, Municipal council 10%, Sports club 1%, Mosque 4%, Other 14%, Don't know 12%, Refused to answer 1%

Southwest: Tribal elder's private residence 31%, Municipal council 18%, Mosque 33%, Other 6%, Don't know 12%, Refused to answer 1%

Libya: Tribal elder's private residence 34%, Municipal council 15%, Sports club 1%, Mosque 15%, Other 9%, Don't know 26%, Refused to answer 1%

Tribal interests—as communicated by networks of notables—are a political reality in Libya, then. However, these realities are remote for most Libyans, who have nuanced opinions of tribalism and, if they belong to a tribe, turn to it only in extreme or unusual circumstances.[30] These attitudes help explain why most Libyans are critical in regard to the legitimacy of tribes as security and justice providers in the current context.

Figure 6. Do you believe that tribal identity is a source of pride? (n=979)

Libya: Strongly agree 37%, Rather agree 12%, Neutral 15%, Rather disagree 8%, Strongly disagree 26%

Southwest: Strongly agree 41%, Rather agree 17%, Neutral 12%, Rather disagree 11%, Strongly disagree 19%

East: Strongly agree 46%, Rather agree 12%, Neutral 14%, Rather disagree 6%, Strongly disagree 20%

West: Strongly agree 33%, Rather agree 11%, Neutral 16%, Rather disagree 9%, Strongly disagree 29%

Legend:
- Strongly agree
- Rather agree
- Neutral
- Rather disagree
- Strongly disagree
- Refused to answer
- Don't know

Tribes as Security and Justice Actors

Box 2. Key Takeaways

Most Libyans prefer that a state policing service be available, and believe that tribes should not be involved in all security and justice issues.

Nonetheless, a significant minority (in some areas majorities) see tribes as effective security providers, perhaps because state providers today are not effective.

The preference is strong for a state-mandated legal order and criminal justice system. Support for an exclusively informal or nonstate justice system is minimal.

Regarding state policing services, the preponderance of national opinion on whether tribes should influence such services was clear; 86 percent of respondents stated that local police should be completely independent of tribal affiliation (see figure 7), and 70 percent felt that tribal elders should not exercise even informal influence over police (see figure 8).

Underneath this clear and overwhelming national preference for a police structure independent of tribal influence, more nuanced views on what role tribes should play emerged. Respondents tended to view tribes positively, as making a significant contribution to security in their areas; however, this view was more commonly encountered in the east—where tribal modes of organization, relationships between tribes, and the boundaries of tribal territories are more stable—than in the west and southwest, where tribal conflicts are currently ongoing (see figure 9).

Just over 60 percent of respondents agreed that tribes were able to "provide security" to the community regardless of individual tribal affiliation (see figure 10), and 51 percent felt that security entities organized along tribal affiliation (armed groups) were less corrupt than state security forces (see figure 11).

Figure 7. Do you agree that local police should be completely independent from any tribal affiliation?
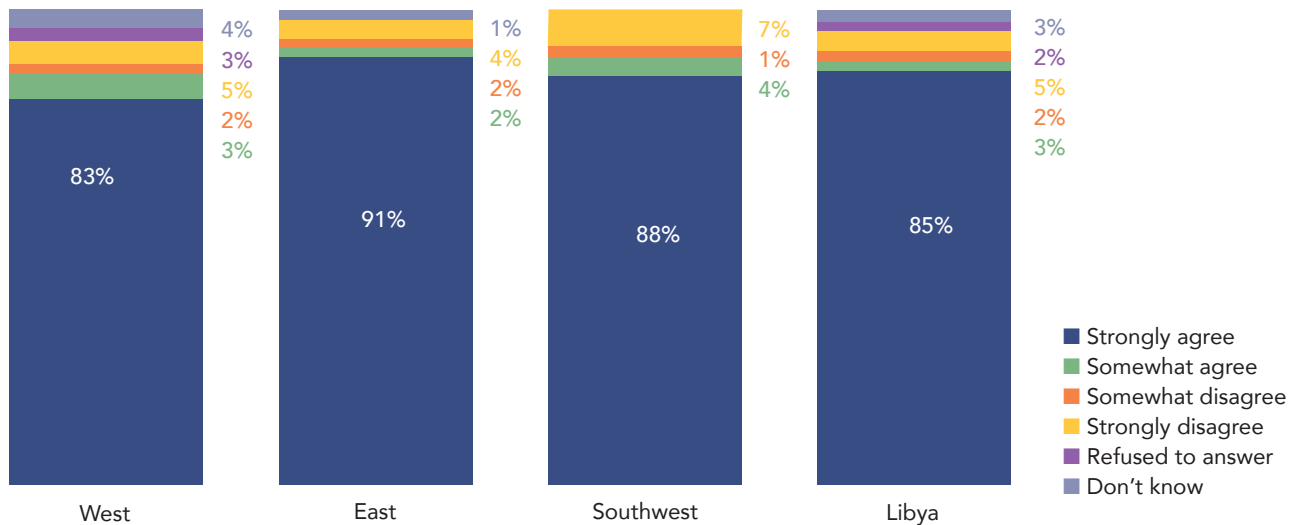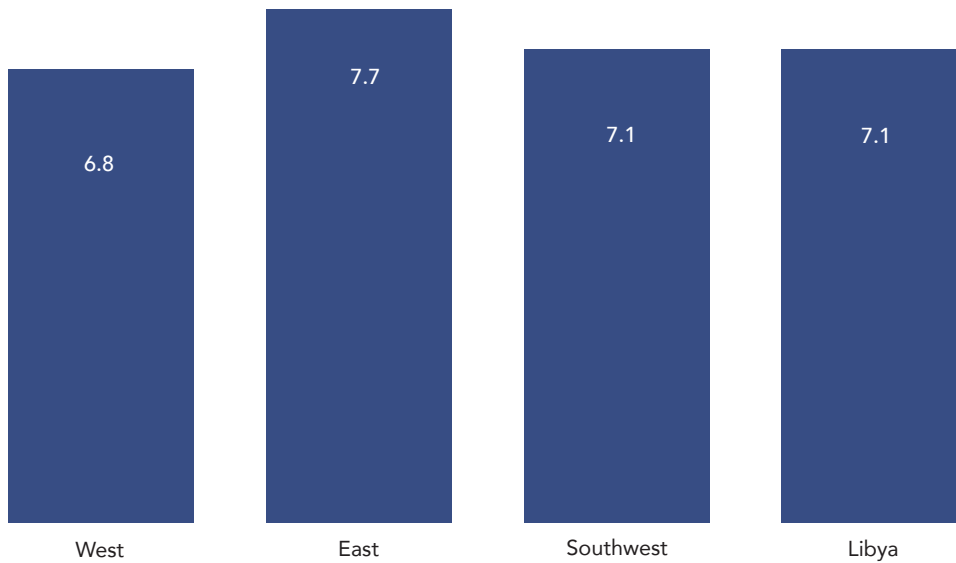
Figure 8. Do you agree that tribal elders should have an influence on local police? (n=979, by region)
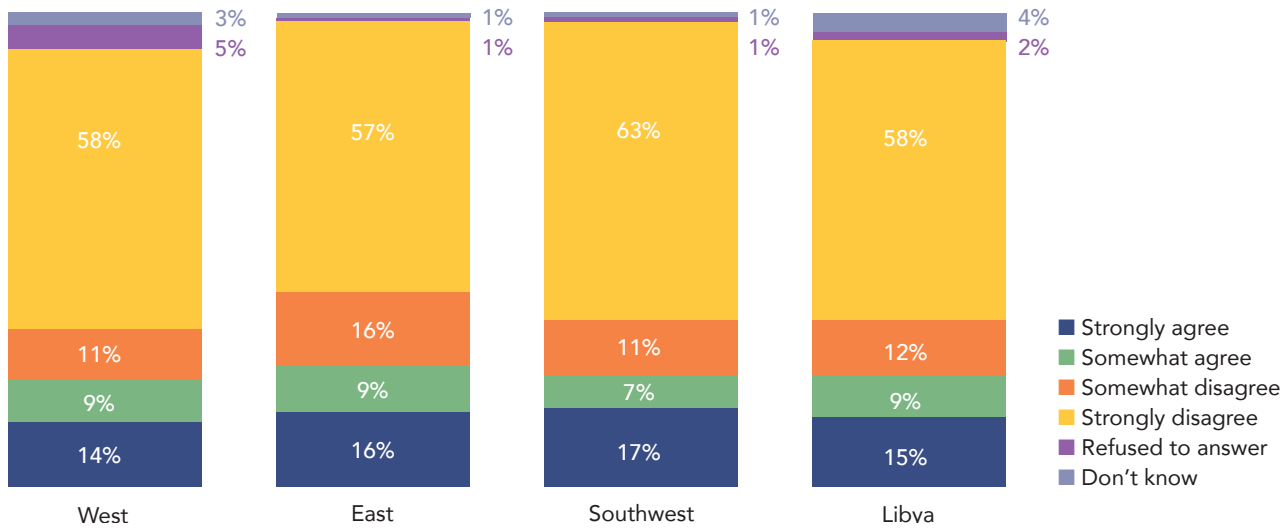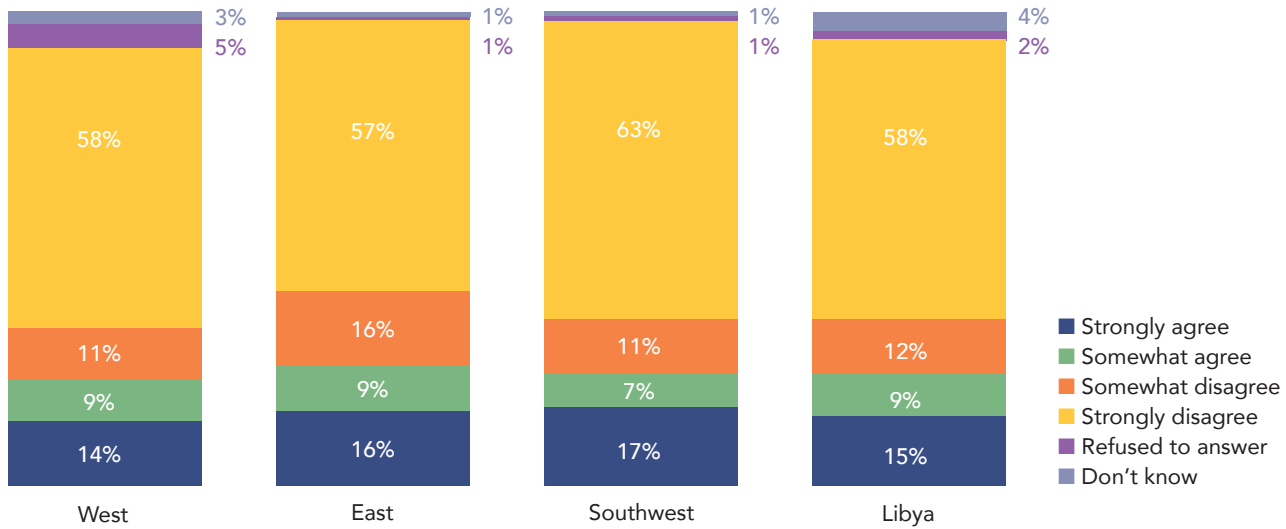

Figure 9. On a scale of 1 to 10, how significant a contribution do you think that tribes make to security in your local area? (n=979, average by region, 1=No contribution, 10=Very important contribution)

Figure 8. Do you agree that tribal elders should have an influence on local police? (n=979, by region)

Figure 9. On a scale of 1 to 10, how significant a contribution do you think that tribes make to security in your local area? (n=979, average by region, 1=No contribution, 10=Very important contribution)
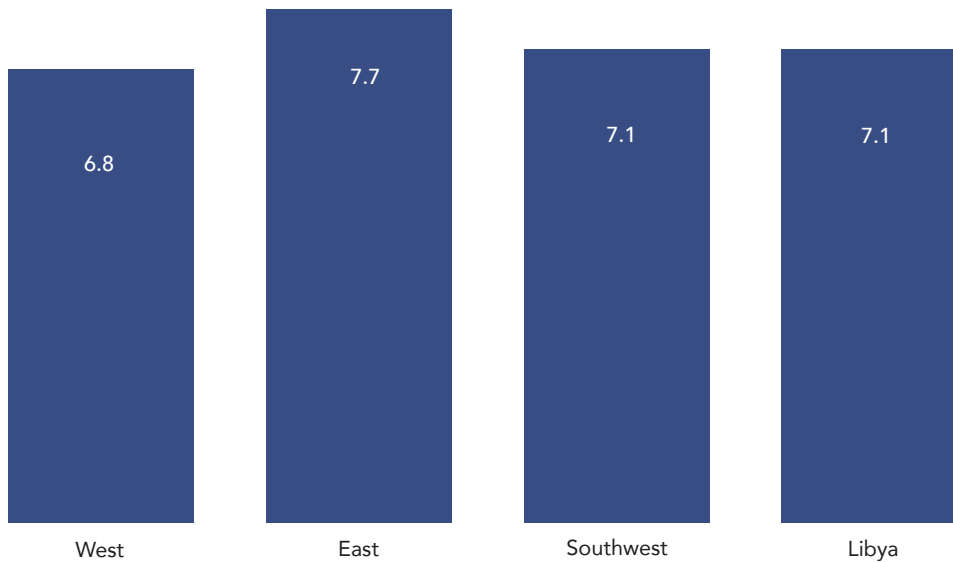
Similar nuances emerged on justice issues. As with policing, a clear national preference for the state to provide justice emerged. Most respondents maintained that "certain crimes are more appropriately handled by the state justice system rather than by tribes"; few held that "tribes do not need the state justice system to provide justice." But just under half of the respondents also acknowledged that tribes could "help the state justice system to provide justice to Libyans." A similar proportion of respondents felt that "victims of crime should be able to influence whether the issue is handled by the tribe or state justice system." Respondents were split on statements attempting to define precisely how tribes supported the state system in regard to issues such as identifying criminals and pretrial detention (see figure 12).

Furthermore, as with perceptions of tribal involvement in policing, a majority of respondents maintained, despite the clear national preference for state justice services, that tribal adjudication of justice issues—where clan heads and notables resolve a criminal offense "out of court," without reference to police or judiciary—could be impartial, honest, and

Figure 12. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=979, by region)
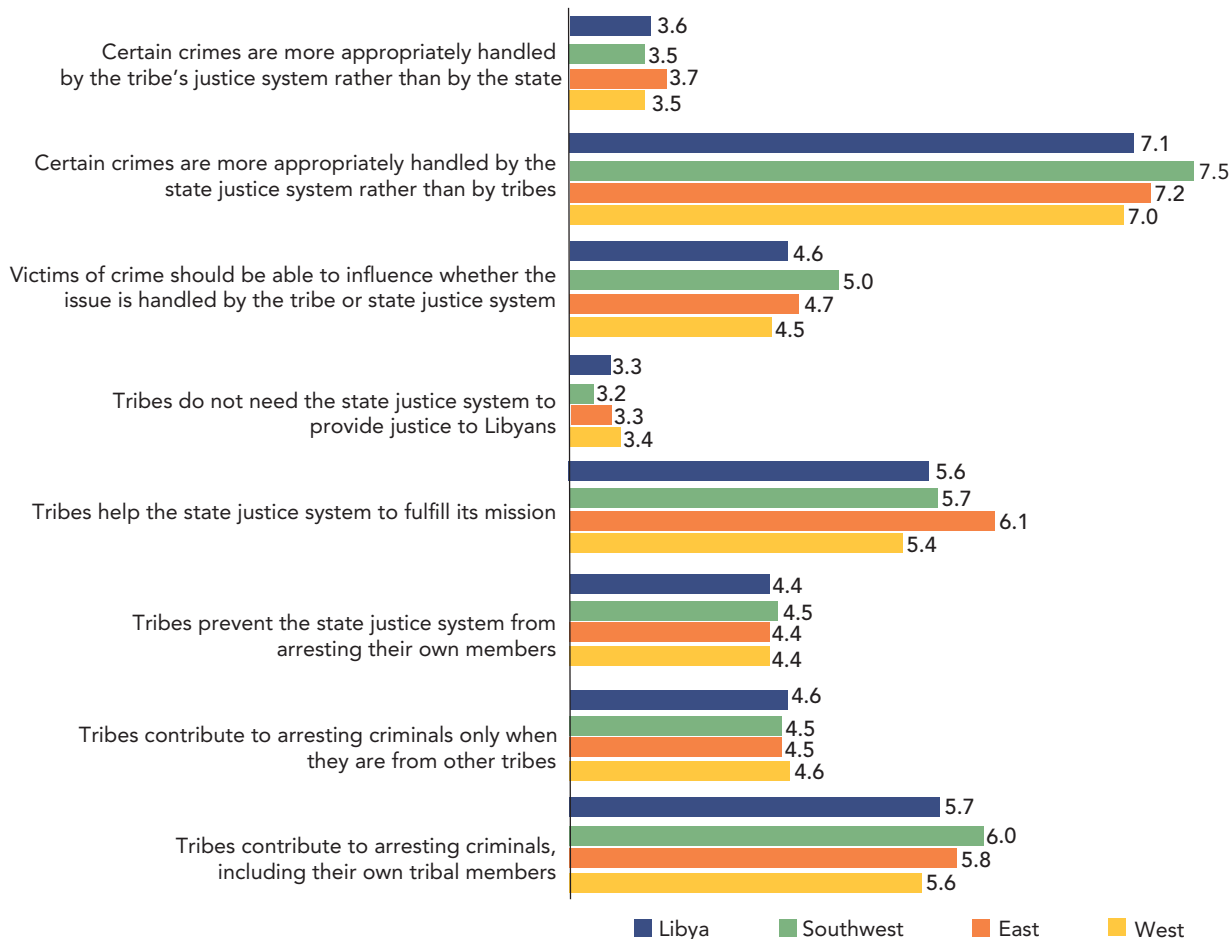
efficient. A significant portion of Libyans, particularly in the southwest and the east, rated justice services provided by tribes highly on these values, though fewer were ready to identify the services as "quick" (see figure 13).

What are we to make of the clear nationwide preference for independent state security and justice provision alongside Libyan acknowledgment that tribes play an informal but not inconsequential role in providing security and justice? It is certain that Libya is not a state in which tribal rule or customary law dominates, and tribal considerations are distant for most Libyans. Equally, it can be said that tribal notables retain influence in local politics and in the provision of justice and security, and that this influence is acknowledged. Given the collapse of the Libyan state, police, and judiciary after 2011, and the rise of armed groups and the spread of arms, one would expect tribal notables—where they have been able to secure a hold over the basic elements of security provision, such as the use of force and access to prisons—to have increased their participation in this sector at the state's expense. Here, however, context and location-specific dynamics matter a great deal—as is shown in the following three case studies of Tobruk, Bani Walid, and Sabha.

Figure 13. On a scale of 1 to 10, to what extent do you consider the justice provided by tribal elders to be…
(1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=979, by region)
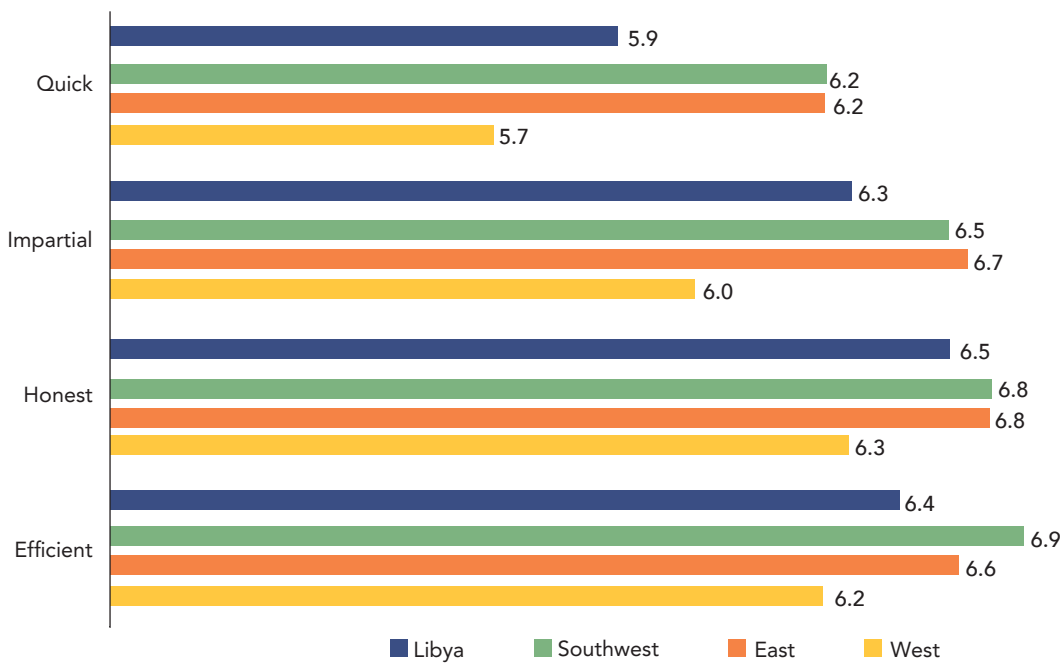
Participation in Security and Justice Provision

Box 3. Key Takeaways

Tribal actors have always had some influence over security and justice structures. This influence has generally increased since the revolution.

Where tribal power structures are stable, they have dominated policing and security services.

Where tribal power structures are unstable, they have lost control of policing and security services, which have thus weakened and sometimes had to rely on armed groups.

Tribal influence over police is derived from the ability of tribes to staff local police structures and the need for the police to secure tribal permissions to act in tribal territories.

Tribal influence over justice actors is limited. However, many cases do not make it to court either because they are resolved through tribal arbitration or because local instability prevents courts from operating.

Tribal participation in security and justice provision is examined across three case studies:

- Tobruk, where tribal power structures are stable and integrated with the state security apparatus;
- Bani Walid, where tribal power structures are stable but act independently of the state security apparatus; and
- Sabha, where tribal dynamics are tense and local security actors rely on external players, notably Misratan and Salafist paramilitaries.

Each discussion begins with a brief description of tribalism in the city and is followed by an analysis of tribal participation in security and justice provision and public perceptions of tribes as security and justice actors.

Tobruk

In Tobruk, the dominant tribe is the al-Ubaidat, which, according to one of their leaders interviewed by Altai, numbers around three hundred thousand. The defections of prominent al-Ubaidat military commanders from Gadhafi to support the revolution in February 2011 led to Gadhafi's losing control of the Tobruk region.[31] As a result, the al-Ubaidat have gained significant influence and legitimacy in postrevolutionary Libya. A number of client tribes are permitted to live on al-Ubaidat land.

Tribes of Tobruk

The tribal territories around Tobruk span from Derna to the Imsa'id border crossing with Egypt. The fundamental social dynamic of the Bedouin tribes of this area is the division of bloodline between the Sa'da tribes, which claim to be descended from the founding mother of the nine aristocratic tribes of Cyrenaica, and the Murabitin tribes, which include the "original" inhabitants of the territory and thus do not have the same lineage as the Sa'da. For this reason, and because some were conquered, the Murabitin tribes are deemed client tribes of the Sa'da. Most Sa'da tribes in the eastern part of the country hold territory through military conquests made during or after the Arab migrations into Libya.[32]
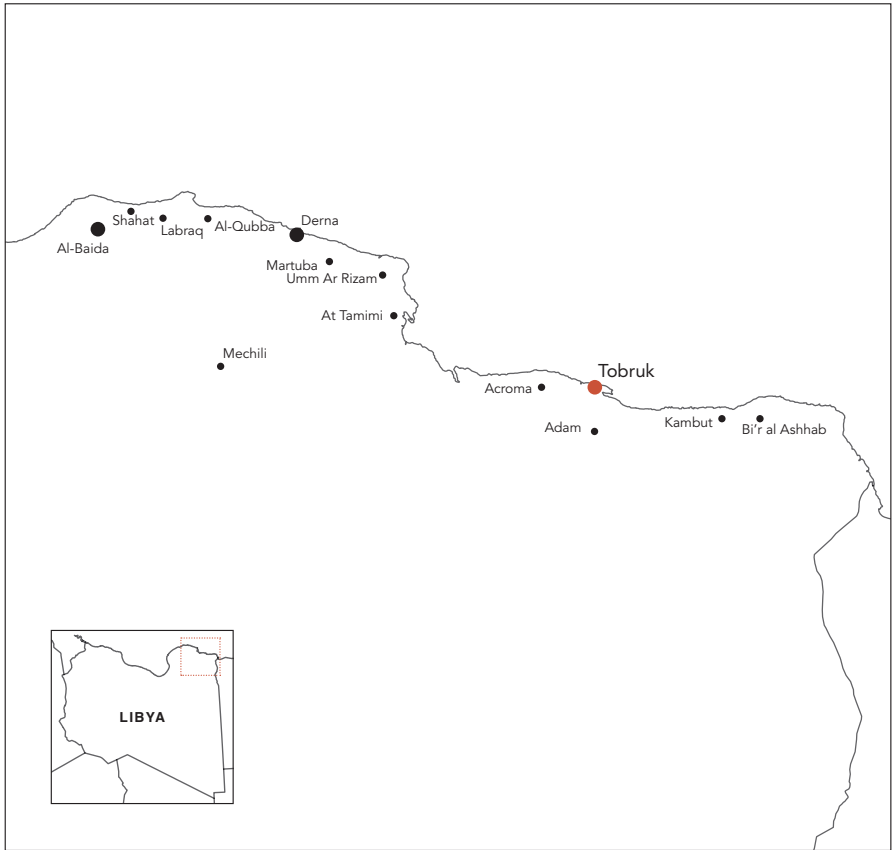
Tobruk

DISTRICT Al-Butnan
REGION Cyrenaica
POPULATION 120,000

MAIN TRIBAL ACTOR(S) Al-Ubaidat (main tribe), Al-Mnaffa, Al-Qut'an, Al-Qunashat, Al-Habun

KEY POINTS

● The Al-Ubaidat defected in the early days of the February 2011 revolution, the primary reason why Qadhafi lost control of the East; today they control all key institutions.

● Internal Al-Ubaidat politics hinges on the relationship between fifteen clans who control different territories.

● Tensions between Al-Ubaidat and other tribes exist but are mediated through complicated arrangements focusing on the gifting of land and buildings, and clientilism.

● Tensions also exist between Westerners (Misratans, Awlad Al Shaikh) who have been offered posts of authority by the House of Representatives.

KEY SECURITY AND JUSTICE ACTORS

● Al-Ubaidat dominate all key military and security institutions, including the General Inspections and Intelligence Apparatuses, the Tobruk Security Directorate, Military Intelligence, the Air Force, military divisions, and naval and army bases.

● The Al-Ubaidat control both the local branches of these institutions in Tobruk and the regional-national leadership.

In Tobruk, the dominant Sa'da tribe is the al-Ubaidat, whose members settled in the region in the eighteenth century, pushing the Awlad Ali into western Egypt.[33] The al-Ubaidat owes its position to its military prowess and its protection of the Sanusi religious order, and for this reason has held the leadership of every security institution in the region since the Ottoman era, including the Libyan National Army under Idris and Gadhafi.[34] Internal al-Ubaidat politics hinge on disputes among the fifteen clans within the tribe, each of which has a different territory and sheikh. Tradition states that these incumbent clans of Sa'da lineage "own" their conquered territory by right; thus, each clan is independent of the other.

Five tribes in the Tobruk region are especially significant:[35]

- *Al-Ubaidat*. The dominant Sa'da tribe in Tobruk, present in the region since the eighteenth century.
- *Al-Mnaffa*. A Murabitin tribe, the al-Mnaffa are considered the oldest inhabitants of the area. The tribe is divided into two branches, the Msika and the Ulum.
- *Al-Qut'an*. A Murabitin tribe, the al-Qut'an is of Berber origin and inhabits the region spanning the modern Egyptian border. It also has two branches, the al-Rahmana and the al-Marirat.

- *Al-Qunashat*. A Murabitin tribe, the al-Qunashat is part of the Awlad Ali tribe, with which the al-Ubaidat warred in the eighteenth century. It was a nomadic tribe, traveling between oases when rainfall permitted.

- *Al-Habun*. A Murabitin tribe, its origin is unrecorded. It consists of six small families.

Tribal Dynamics Within Security and Justice Entities

Individuals from the al-Ubaidat tribe sit at the head of all the main civilian security institutions in Tobruk: the Security Directorate (headed, as of March 2015, by Colonel Ahmad Sa'd Shu'aib) and its Criminal Investigations Department (headed by Colonel Ramadan al-Mazini) and General Inspections Apparatus (headed by Colonel Rafi). Client tribes staff the mid- and junior levels; notably, the Masamir tribe has specialized primarily in domestic intelligence, and the tribe's members hold a number of key posts within the General Inspections Apparatus. In an indication of the political reality of al-Ubaidat tribal pride, during the government of the House of Representatives, based in Tobruk, the speaker of Parliament and the interior minister explicitly tried to cultivate al-Ubaidat political support by favoring the tribe's candidates when appointing the heads of the security institutions.

Within Tobruk, the tension between the al-Ubaidat and Murabitin tribes was palpable and recognized in field interviews. Conflicts are mostly mediated in two ways. One is by securing complicated arrangements involving the ownership and gifting of land and buildings used for policing and military purposes.[36] The other is by allowing Murabitin tribes to staff institutions, which allows the tribes to have a voice in policing and security policy.[37]

Despite members of the al-Ubaidat occupying key positions within the Security Directorate (or perhaps because they do have control of those positions), the directorate exercises effectively no authority over Tobruk's al-Ubaidat, or Murabitin tribes, in criminal or political affairs. In the vast majority of cases, tribes resolve their own civil or criminal matters using mediation by a third tribe. When a security incident involves members of one tribe, the identity of the suspects is normally quickly verified, and the mediating tribe takes the "suspect" under its protection while the case is "resolved," bypassing the formal criminal justice system and ordinary forms of pretrial detention. Arrest warrants are deemed necessary only when tribes refuse to cooperate and in practice require preapproval from tribal notables. A police colonel from the Qut'an tribe stated that the directorate would not arrest any person until it had issued three warnings to the tribe, after which the directorate would send notables a request for approval for arrest.

Notables with legal training within the tribes normally use Libyan criminal law, rather than customary law, to base their decisions regarding the punishment for committing a crime. However, the application of criminal law varies according to the circumstances of the crime and the relative wealth and power of both the criminal's tribe and the victim's tribe. Since 2011, the number of cases resolved by tribes alone, without recourse to the judicial system, has risen where the justice system is constrained in processing new cases or viewed as ill equipped to apply a punishment such as imprisonment.

For these reasons, the Central Investigations Department of the Security Directorate in Tobruk is limited to providing technical assistance. Because the identity of suspects is generally investigated and determined by the criminal's and the victim's tribes, criminal investigation skills generally come into play only in cases where tribes have no purview, such as in cases regarding foreign workers. At the time of writing, the Central Investigations Directorate had been required to assist in only two such cases since the 2011 revolution.

Arrest warrants are deemed necessary only when tribes refuse to cooperate and in practice require preapproval from tribal notables.
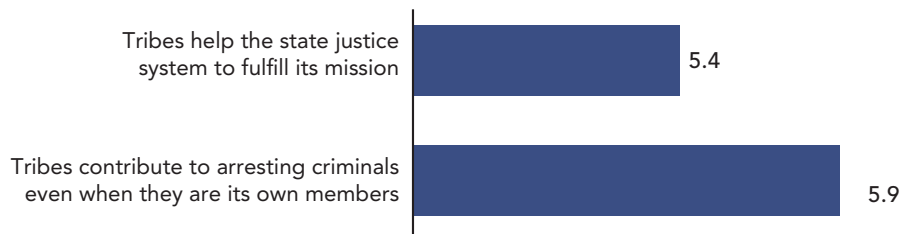
Public Perceptions

Public perceptions of policing and justice services in Tobruk are mixed. Residents polled in Tobruk rated tribes more highly than Libyans overall on questions pertaining to issues such as arrests—a judgment that reflects how relatively swiftly tribes in Tobruk can identify and detain suspects in most cases (see figure 14). Moreover, 86 percent of respondents from Tobruk agreed that tribes provide security to all communities regardless of tribal member-ship. In other words, the public in Tobruk appears to be comfortable with the role played by tribes in working with policing entities to self-police and identify suspects (see figure 15), and views tribes as acting relatively impartially in apprehending even members of their own tribes. These findings appear to reflect a level of respect or appreciation for the manner in which the al-Ubaidat and client tribes play their role in security and justice provision in Tobruk.

Figure 14. Do you consider that justice provided by tribal elders is... (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=22, Tobruk)

Certain crimes are appropriately handled by the tribal justice system rather than by the state: 4.6

Certain crimes are appropriately handled by the state justice system rather than by the tribes: 7.3

Figure 15. Do you agree with the following statements? (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=22, Tobruk)

Tribes help the state justice system to fulfill its mission: 5.4

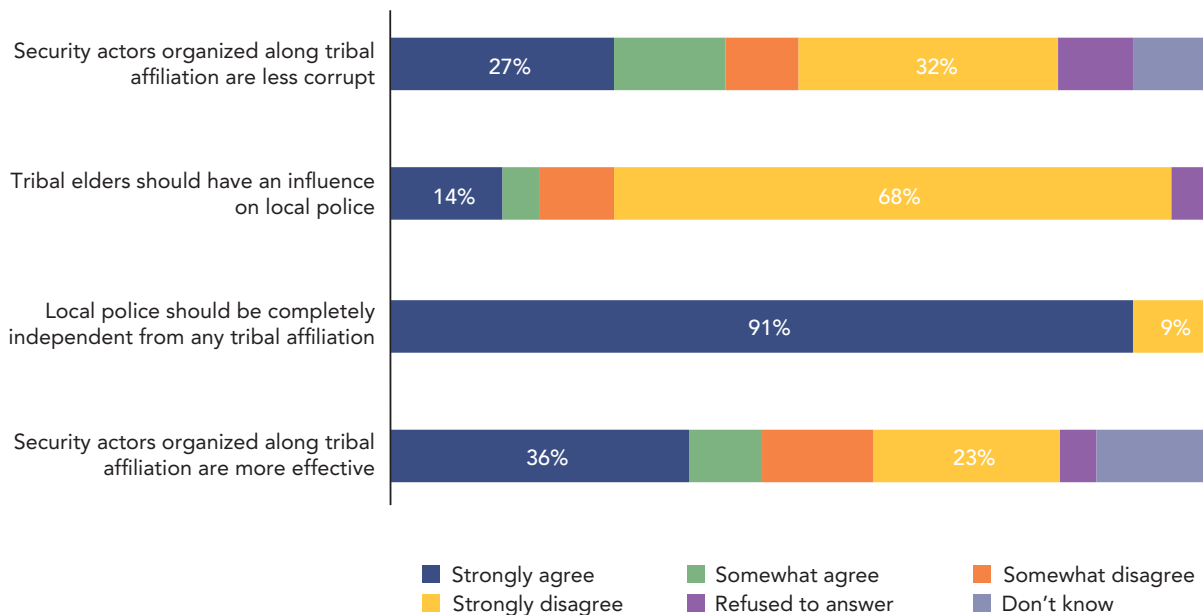Tribes contribute to arresting criminals even when they are its own members: 5.9

Nevertheless, public opinion in Tobruk holds that tribes are a relatively poor substitute for an independent state judicial system, with most respondents from Tobruk believing that the state justice system is a more appropriate actor regarding criminal issues than the tribe (see figure 16). Further confirming the preference for state security and justice institutions independent of tribal influence, 91 percent of respondents agreed that local police should be completely independent from any tribal affiliation, and only 19 percent agreed that tribal elders should have an influence on local police (see figure 17).

Figure 16. Do you agree with the following statements? (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=22, Tobruk)

Quick	6.4
Impartial	6.5
Honest	6.8
Efficient	6.8

Figure 17. Do you agree with the following statements? (n=22, Tobruk)

	Strongly agree		Strongly disagree	
Security actors organized along tribal affiliation are less corrupt	27%		32%	
Tribal elders should have an influence on local police	14%		68%	
Local police should be completely independent from any tribal affiliation	91%		9%	
Security actors organized along tribal affiliation are more effective	36%		23%	

Legend: Strongly agree, Somewhat agree, Somewhat disagree, Strongly disagree, Refused to answer, Don't know

Bani Walid

Bani Walid is a market town connecting the oasis towns of the Fezzan to the coastal ports. It lies in a valley and is the near exclusive habitat of the Warfalla tribe, whose descendants are spread across Libya and south into neighboring Niger and Chad. The valley in which Bani Walid is located contains olive trees cultivated by these families over generations, visible claims to heritage and territory.

Tribes of Bani Walid

The only tribe in Bani Walid is the Warfalla. The region encompassing Bani Walid was originally named Wrfalla (a name with Berber Amazigh roots). Whereas in Tobruk, Arab tribes conquered and established clients, in Wrfalla, Arab Bedouin tribes cohabitated with other migrating families and clans, or sometimes integrated with them formally (*mukatabah*) in a sort of tribal brotherhood (*muwakhah*) until fifty-two clans, or "houses" (*lahmat*), emerged. These clans then "became" the Warfalla tribe, named after the territory they lived in.[38] Within the Warfalla, as in Tobruk, the "unadulterated" Arab Bedouins of the Cyrenaican Sa'da tribes are distinguished from those whose ancestors integrated with other tribes, which are collectively called the Mtarfa. The dominant Sa'da tribes occupied—and still occupy—the highlands and best arable land in the area; the Mtarfa occupy the drier plains stretching toward Misrata.
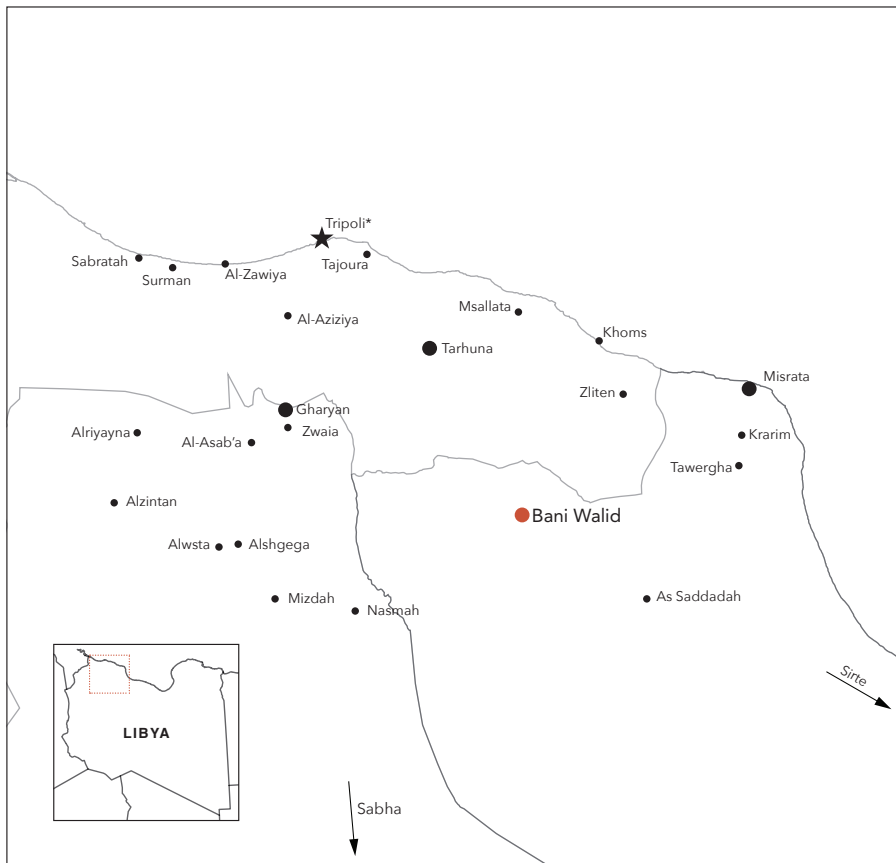
Bani Walid

DISTRICT Misrata
REGION Tripolitania
POPULATION 85,425

MAIN TRIBAL ACTOR(S) Warfalla

KEY POINTS

- Rejected both revolution and state during the 2011 uprising: Pure-blooded Warfalla families sought to maintain their dominance over mixed-blood families who supported the revolution in an attempt to upend the social order.

- No state security presence, refusal to recognize the authority of any state representative.

- Following the revolution, fighting continued between locals and revolutionary brigades, notably Misratans; the Third Force under Salah Badi was eventually ejected from the city.

- Many youth subsequently joined Operation Dignity and Zintan during the battle for Tripoli in summer and fall 2014.

KEY SECURITY AND JUSTICE ACTORS

- Two historic security bodies were destroyed during the revolution.

- Security is organized locally by the Warfalla Social Council.

In the Ottoman era, this loose structure was codified into fifths (*akhmas*) for tax collection, from which a social structure and hierarchy developed that persists today. The Sa'dat, who are considered the town's natural leaders, became one fifth. Below that, two other fifths—the Jmamla, who migrated to the Warfalla with Awlad Sulaiman families in 1842 after the collapse of the Fezzan Sultanate, and the Sabayi', composed of religious clan families—are also considered significant social leaders of the Warfalla. At the bottom of this social hierarchy are the underprivileged Mtarfa, whose clans make up the other two fifths, named the Faladna and Lawtiyin.[39] A simmering and long-standing animosity between the Mtarfa and the town's social leadership exploded into open conflict during and following the 2011 revolution, the upper families of the Warfalla supporting the Gadhafi regime, and the Mtarfa families supporting the revolution.

Tribal Dynamics Within Security and Justice Entities

Following the 2011 revolution, conflict was significant in and around the city of Bani Walid, considered one of the final strongholds of forces loyal to the ousted Gadhafi regime. Although revolutionaries temporarily captured the city, the notables of the Warfalla tribe successfully regained control by early 2012, and it became a haven for those who had supported the regime. The result was the eviction of all pro-revolution armed group battalions and military councils from the city.

In February 2012, the notables of Bani Walid created the Warfalla Social Council (WSC), which brought together notables from Warfalla families across Libya but was heavily dominated by those from Bani Walid.[40] WSC members meet daily in the center of town to coordinate and plan local affairs; it is through these regular meetings that the WSC mediates policing and justice issues within Bani Walid.

The WSC ignores and refuses to recognize the legitimacy of any postrevolutionary government or national institutions. On matters of security and justice provision, the WSC does not recognize the orders of the General Security Directorate of the Libyan National Police, or decisions taken by the judiciary and prosecutor general; nor does it recognize the Libyan Armed Forces. Although a local security directorate technically exists in the city, it is paralyzed by the resistance of local notables and not operational. Antagonism to national institutions is due in part to the unique transitional justice issues faced by Bani Walid, whose youth formed a significant proportion of loyalist fighters for Gadhafi during the revolution, and who since the revolution have harbored a number of figures considered to be war criminals for whom arrest warrants have been issued. Unlike in other regions in Libya, where tribes have worked with state security and justice institutions or "stacked" them in their favor, the WSC—which similarly dominated these institutions in Gadhafi's time—now finds itself acting outside the law of a state it no longer recognizes.

> We are waiting until a fair and neutral justice system is activated in order to try the criminals. We have neither the capacity nor the necessary legal arsenal to deal with those cases.
>
> —Bani Walid notable

The WSC has assumed authority over all policing and justice service functions. It has no legal mandate from and no relationship with the Libyan judicial system, but precisely for this reason enjoys strong popular support within the town. In reality, the WSC's purview is mostly

confined to resolving petty crimes. Cases of murder, torture, arbitrary detention, or kidnapping are not dealt with; the WSC considers itself neither qualified nor entitled to deal with such cases, and in fact would disagree with the laws of the postrevolutionary Libyan state over any cases defined as such. Consequently, cases of petty crime have been on the rise since 2012, and the failure to resolve murder, arbitrary detention, and kidnapping cases has begun to undermine the WSC's legitimacy in the eyes of the families of victims and the community as a whole. For example, the town remains angry after the discovery of the bodies of twenty-one people who, according to Bani Walid residents, had died under torture in neighboring Misratan prisons during the postrevolution conflict in 2012 and 2013. Additionally, because many of Bani Walid's youth remain in detention in Misrata and other neighboring cities, the WSC's primary justice service function has been to mediate with neighboring tribes and towns.

The other serious security challenge presently facing Bani Walid is that of the Islamic State and religious radicalization. Radical Salafist communities are present in Bani Walid, and some elders interviewed cited bombings of the Sufi Sheikh Ali Zraiq shrine in Bani Walid in December 2014 as evidence of their presence. Separately, Islamic State meetings, recruitment efforts, and use of safe houses have been reported in Sirte, Harawah, Sukna, Hun, Tarhuna, and Zilla—all areas close to Bani Walid and within which Bani Walid and Warfalla families live. In part, the ability of the Islamic State to work in such areas is a consequence of these tribes' resistance to the postrevolutionary security state and the factions dominating it, combined with an inability by the Misratan Third Force—which operates much like an army and is deployed across central and western Libya—to substantially penetrate the tribal fabric of these towns. The resentment and marginalization felt by these tribes has also enabled the Islamic State to develop tentative contact with the WSC and exploit the political discontent and security vacuum.[41]

The nature of these contacts is probably related in part to liaison and governance; for example, the Islamic State employs local elements to conduct negotiations and to operate checkpoints. At present, Warfalla notables have made no decision to "join" the Islamic State, and some notables have explicitly warned against the consequences of such a step. According to interviews with the WSC deputy leader and a prominent Warfalla family with knowledge of the negotiations, a number of Warfalla and Bani Walid residents were killed in uprisings against the Islamic State's presence in the neighboring city of Sirte; one such uprising was led by a member of the Warfalla tribe.

Public Perceptions of Tribal Influence over Security and Justice Actors

In Bani Walid, survey data were limited because of significant local sensitivity to questioning and the way in which Bani Walid was classified geographically in the survey.[42] Nonetheless, qualitative interviews conducted for this study and statements issued by the WSC indicate that the town does not trust the independence or neutrality of any of the postrevolutionary security or justice institutions, to the extent that townspeople have refused to deal with them. Nationally, the reputation of Warfalla has been affected by this perception and by its close association with Gadhafi.

Sabha

The town of Sabha is founded on an old oasis settlement that, due to its position at the head of several wadis and traversable desert tracks, has always been the "capital," or central point, of Libya's southern Fezzan region. But unlike Bani Walid (an old market center) or Tobruk

The town does not trust the independence or neutrality of any of the postrevolutionary security or justice institutions, to the extent that townspeople have refused to deal with them.

(an old port), Sabha is also a modern urban settlement that is home to tribes from across the region who settled in the town in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

Tribes of Sabha

The original inhabitants of the Sabha oasis are a collection of minor families and tribes collectively called the Fezzazna. In modern times, however, governance in Sabha has rested on reconfigurations of a tribal alliance (*saff*) between nomadic Arab tribes that has dominated Fezzan politics since the Ottoman era.[43] When the Ottomans attempted to collect taxes and control Saharan trade routes, the Awlad Sulaiman, Qadhadhfa, and Warfalla banded together in an alliance called al-Suff al-Fuqhi. This alliance was centered in Sabha and led by the Awlad Sulaiman, specifically the Saif al-Nasr family, who briefly headed a sultanate in Fezzan from 1830 to 1842. The Ottomans levied the Fezzazna clans—the Awlad Bu Saif and Magharha—to fight the sultanate, and in 1842 Saif al-Nasr was killed.

The alliance was revived in 1923, after the Italians reoccupied Libya and again employed the Magharha and other minor Fezzan clans to control the tribes. The Italians installed a cooperative tribal notable, Khalifa al-Zawi, who ruled from the neighboring town of Murzuq from 1916; the Awlad Sulaiman and Warfalla evicted Zawi from Murzuq in 1926, but by 1930 had lost to Italy, which used poison gas and airplanes against them. After independence, the tribes returned from exile and formed part the bedrock of the Libyan state in the west.
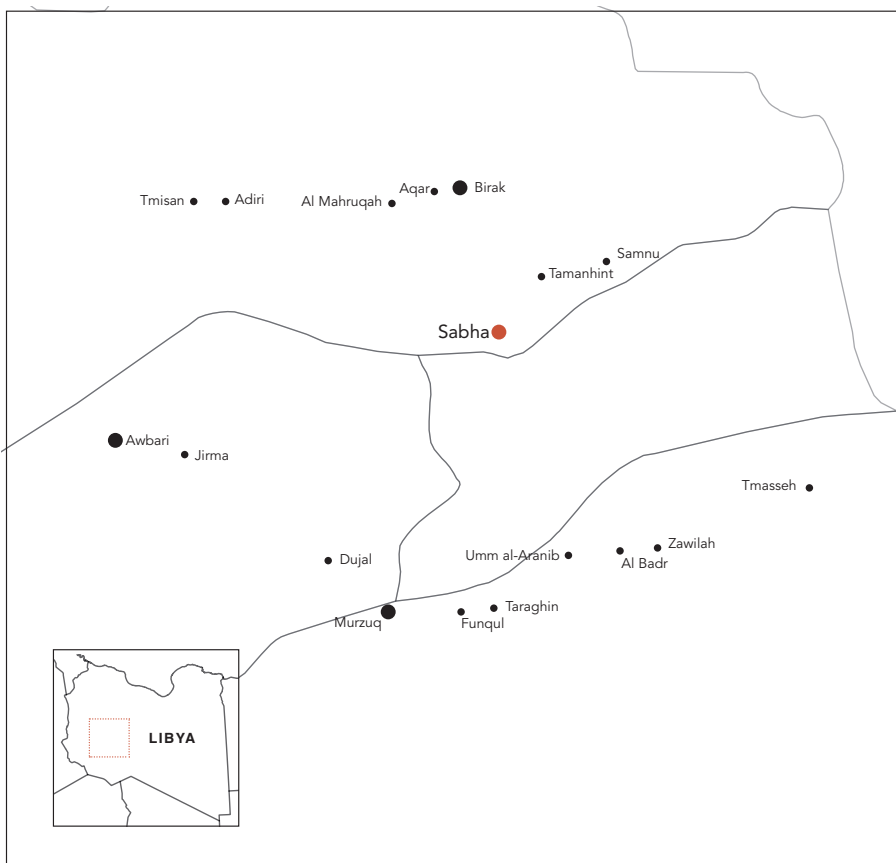
Sabha

DISTRICT Sabha
REGION Fezzan
POPULATION 96,872

MAIN TRIBAL ACTOR(S) Awlad Sulaiman, Qadhadhfa, Warfalla, Awlad Bu Saif, Hasawna, Magharha, Tebu, Tuareg, Fezzazna (collection of tribes and families)

KEY POINTS

● Decades of infighting and Gadhafi's manipulation of tribal dynamics have led to fragmented and tense relationships between the various tribes in Sabha.

● During the Gadhafi coup of 1969, Gadhafi sought to minimize the influence of the previously dominant Awlad Sulaiman and Warfalla, to the benefit of the Qadhadfa; this power dynamic was reversed during the 2011 revolution, leading to a tribal struggle for power.

● Since the 2011 revolution, fighting has continued between the various tribes, sometimes leading to heavy fighting and serious casualties on all sides.

KEY SECURITY AND JUSTICE ACTORS

● Misratans (the Third Force) are the key security providers in the Sabha, along with joint patrols by the Awlad Sulaiman-led Sixth Infantry Brigade.

● Of the local tribes, the Awlad Sulaiman hold the upper hand in terms of military strength thanks to their alliance with the Misratans.

Another scion of the Saif al-Nasr family, Muhammad Saif al-Nasr, became ruler over Fezzan. The Warfalla, Zintan, and the Qadhadhfa followed the Awlad Sulaiman into government under Saif al-Nasr and nascent military and police forces.[44]

The Gadhafi coup of 1969 shook up the tribal order in Sabha again; Gadhafi sought to minimize the influence of the tribes, placed the Qadhadhfa at the head of the military and security institutions, and brought in previously minor and marginalized tribes such as the Magharha in Sabha. Gadhafi encouraged large numbers of poor migrant Awlad Sulaiman and Warfalla tribal members to immigrate from Chad and Niger, so as to undermine the powerful merchants and heads of the Warfalla and the Awlad Sulaiman, including the Saif al-Nasr family, whose leader died in jail in the 1980s, interviewed family members explained.

In 2011, the balance of power changed again as the Qadhadhfa and Magharha fled, and the Awlad Sulaiman switched sides. The Awlad Sulaiman's turn against the Qadhadhfa, and subsequent alliance with the Misratans, has severely damaged the old tribal pacts that kept the city secure, and policing and security governance in the city reflects this background tribal struggle for power.

Eight tribes in the Sabha region are particularly significant:[45]

- *Awlad Bu Saif.* One of the more prominent of the score of minor families and tribes collectively known as the Fezzazna.

- *Awlad Sulaiman.* An Arab tribe that briefly headed a sultanate in Fezzan from 1830 to 1842. The tribe repositioned itself as a key client tribe to the Qadhadhfa during the Gadhafi regime, leading to significant Awlad Sulaiman migration into Sabha in the 1980s. The tribe has sought to reassert itself as the dominant tribe in Sabha since the revolution by allying with Misrata.

- *Hasawna.* A minor Arab tribe based to the north of Sabha.

- *Magharha.* A small Arab tribe based in Birak al-Shati'. Historically marginal, the tribe was brought into the security and justice services by Gadhafi to counterbalance the historical and demographic influence of major Arab tribes.

- *Qadhadhfa.* A small Arab tribe based in the Sirte region. Gadhafi placed this tribe—his own—in key security and government posts.

- *Tebu.* A Saharan ethnic group who live across southern Libya, northern Chad, and northeastern Niger. The Tebu have its own language and cultural norms.

- *Tuareg.* A Saharan Berber ethnic group spread across the Maghreb and Sahel, including southern Libya, Mali, Niger, and Algeria. Traditionally nomadic pastoralists, many Tuareg are now seminomadic. They have their own language and cultural norms.

- *Warfalla.* The Warfalla is a significant presence in Sabha, and, with the Awlad Sulaiman, is very influential because of its numerical weight across Libya. See also the Bani Walid case study.

Tribal Dynamics Within Security and Justice Entities

Given Sabha's heterogeneous tribal composition and history of repeated social reordering, it is perhaps unsurprising that social hierarchies have been significantly upset by the 2011 revolution and its aftermath. Since 2011, the city has experienced repeated waves of intertribal conflict, with tribes violently recontesting the social, political, and economic space. In January 2014, the prime minister at the time, Ali Zeidan, decided to deploy the Third Force—a military unit formed after the revolution in the powerful coastal city of Misrata—in Sabha, theoretically as a

neutral pacifying force.[46] The result has been that Sabha's military security is now almost exclusively Misratan-dominated, a configuration accepted locally to some degree because Misratans historically have not been a part of tribal alliances in the area. During key informant interviews conducted in Sabha for this report, respondents indicated that Misratan might is tolerated because of the Third Force's ability to suppress otherwise uncontainable intertribal violence.

> Sabha residents say we don't do anything because crime rate has risen. But we are not here for policing in the city; this is the responsibility of the tribes.
>
> —Third Force Head of Operations

The Third Force has tended to refrain from taking on policing duties, viewing itself as an army and preferring to delegate these tasks to tribes or to tribal armed groups. Nonetheless, given the lack of a normally functioning police force, Sabha residents have sometimes asked the Third Force to help investigate and resolve civil and criminal disputes, such as robbery cases. The Third Force has done so on a purely discretionary basis, primarily as favors to individuals. It does not control or police through any official state institutions in Sabha or elsewhere in the south, though it is reported to maintain an unofficial prison.

As in most cities, the Security Directorate of the National Police technically oversees regular civilian police departments in Sabha, though these barely function. Most policing activities occur through coordination with newly formed state security entities: the Ahrar Fezzan (the Freemen of Fezzan, whose members style themselves the Intelligence Force) and the (Salafist) Special Deterrence Force (SDF), which technically are under the authority, respectively, of the chief of staff and the Ministry of Interior. Both are led and dominated by members of the Awlad Sulaiman tribe, but have made efforts to recruit across tribal lines and include members of the Tuareg and the Hasawna and Awlad Bu Saif tribes. Nonetheless, the extensive control over their activities exercised by Awlad Sulaiman has limited their ability to carry out policing across Sabha's many and mixed tribal lines. The movement of the SDF and the Ahrar Fezzan is also restricted by the Third Force, which tries to insist that they obtain its permission before conducting operations. However, neither the SDF nor the Ahrar Fezzan appear to follow these strictures at times of communal unrest.

> In a murder case, if the family of the victim requests that the culprit is turned over to us, or if the family of the culprit hands him in, we put him in prison. But we cannot go and arrest the culprit by force because of the tribal implications. This would only be possible if tribes lifted social protection of criminals.
>
> —Head of the SDF

Tribes do not cooperate with any of these entities when apprehending and detaining suspects. The Ahrar Fezzan is held in particularly low regard because its leader, Bahr al-Din Rifi, a former head of the military council in Sabha, is widely deemed responsible for outbreaks of violence against Tebu neighborhoods in April 2012. Over the years of conflict in Sabha, neighborhood zones controlled by local tribes (who dictate who can or cannot safely enter) have developed, and the tribes have usually refused to permit entry to the Awlad Sulaiman units that conduct policing investigations. The Awlad Sulaiman armed groups carry out their own criminal investigations but acknowledge that once a suspect enters a tribal zone, they can do nothing to apprehend him.

The SDF, despite its Awlad Sulaiman leadership, has assumed greater prominence in policing provision because of its close association with Misrata's Third Force. It has assumed authority over what would ordinarily be Ministry of Justice judicial police functions and is in charge of Sabha prison by the Security Directorate. It also reportedly runs an unofficial prison in Sabha Fortress. The force recruits from Salafist religious networks and operates on a code of Salafist morals and discipline, which appear to have enabled it to overcome—at least in part—the tribal tensions and divisions that have circumscribed the Ahrar Fezzan. This religiosity also reportedly extends to extrajudicial "moral policing" activities. For example, twenty-five of Sabha prison's approximately ninety-five inmates were—according to the SDF's head, Ibrahim Muhammad—voluntarily handed into custody by their relatives without any police proceedings appearing to have taken place. Other inmates were reported as having had their arrest processed by the Security Directorate, but the SDF had in fact arrested them. When the research for this report was conducted, the inmates included fifty alleged gang members (*haraba*) arrested for petty theft and nineteen on murder charges; in most, if not all, cases, some aspect of intertribal violence was alleged.

Judicial proceedings have come to an almost complete halt because of unpaid wages and threats to judges' safety. However, different interviewees painted different pictures as to the source of the problem. The head of the SDF implied that civilian court employees were to blame because they had conducted a sit-in to protest unpaid wages and closed the court. The head of Sabha's local council claimed that armed groups employed to guard the court had shut it down to force payment of five months' unpaid wages. After the municipality paid the armed groups, the court reopened but the civilian employees refused to return, citing safety issues.

In conclusion, intertribal and inter–armed group conflict dynamics prevent a unified and effective police force in Sabha, though Salafist and Misratan security actors appear, for different reasons, to be able to overcome those tribal dynamics to some extent and to provide some security. Insecurity and damage to normal policing structures have also had the knock-on effect of incapacitating the justice system.

Judicial proceedings have come to an almost complete halt because of unpaid wages and threats to judges' safety.

Public Perceptions of Tribal Influence over Security and Justice Actors

Respondents from Sabha provide mixed views on local tribal security and justice actors. Just over 90 percent of respondents agreed that local police should be independent of any tribal affiliation. Almost 60 percent replied "No, not at all" to the statement "Security actors organized along tribal affiliation are less corrupt," which is the largest proportion of any area sample that responded in that fashion (see figure 18). However, 68 percent of respondents from Sabha still thought tribes made a significant contribution to security in their local area, and 41 percent thought tribal actors organized along tribal lines were more effective, as opposed to 55 percent who did not. One in two respondents from Sabha "strongly agree[d]" with the statement, "Tribes only provide security to their members"; almost as many did not agree.

Perhaps for these reasons, despite the communal violence, Sabha residents, acknowledging the problems that tribalism in policing services has created, still tended to rate tribes themselves as significantly more effective (see figures 19 and 20). In other words, Sabha residents appear to be turning away from state policing services, dominated as they are by Awlad Sulaiman, and relying on tribal elders for policing and mediation services. Yet Sabha residents are more likely than the national average to prefer disputes to be arbitrated by a state-run legal system, rather than by tribal customary law (see figure 21).

Figure 18. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (n=22, Sabha)
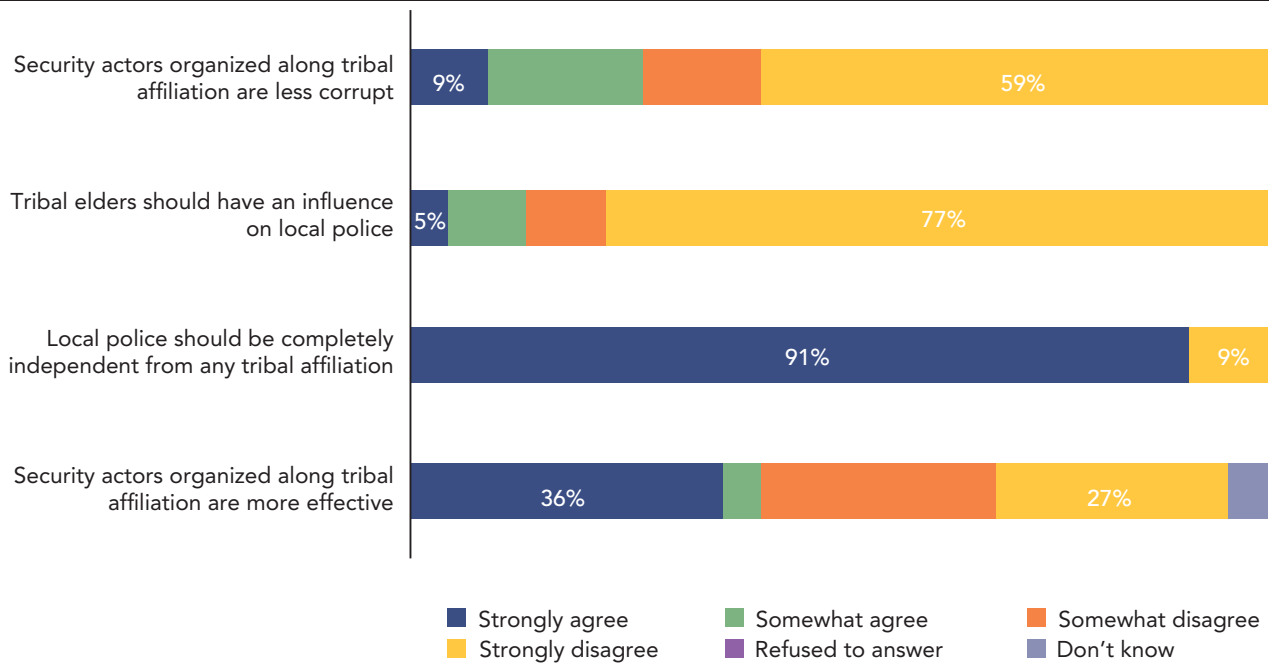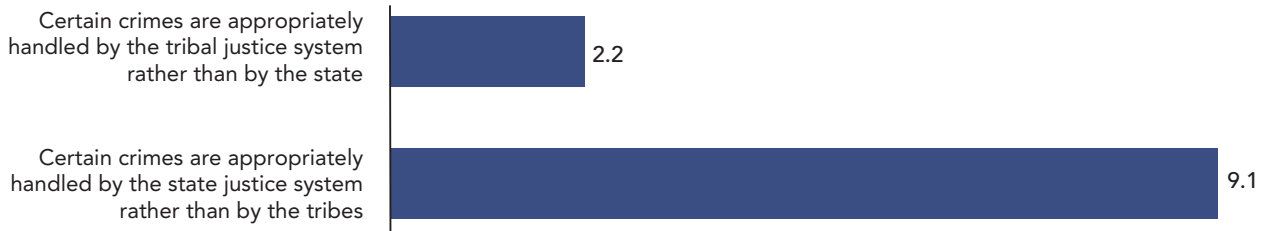

Security actors organized along tribal affiliation are less corrupt — 9% ... 59%

Tribal elders should have an influence on local police — 5% ... 77%

Local police should be completely independent from any tribal affiliation — 91% ... 9%

Security actors organized along tribal affiliation are more effective — 36% ... 27%

■ Strongly agree ■ Somewhat agree ■ Somewhat disagree
■ Strongly disagree ■ Refused to answer ■ Don't know

Figure 19. Do you consider that justice provided by tribal elders is... (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=22, Sabha)

Quick — 6.0
Impartial — 6.3
Honest — 6.7
Efficient — 6.0

Figure 20. Do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=22, Sabha)

Tribes help the state justice system fulfill its mission — 5.4

Tribes contribute to arresting criminals even when they are its own members — 5.9

Figure 21. Do you agree with the following statements? (1=Not at all, 10=Yes, absolutely, n=22, Sabha)

Perceptions of individual tribes were strongly negative, though for a variety of social and historical reasons, some tribes—such as the Warfalla and Tuareg—are viewed more positively than others. As regards the Awlad Sulaiman, 18 percent of respondents believed it played a positive role and 64 percent a negative one. The figures for other tribes were as follows: the Warfalla, 27 percent positive and 41 percent negative; the Qadhadhfa, 9 percent positive and 59 percent negative; the Magharha, 18 percent positive and 68 percent negative; the Tebu, 18 percent positive and 68 percent negative; and the Tuareg, 32 percent positive and 55 percent negative.

Tribal Mediation: A National Perspective

In addition to being involved currently in security and justice provision, as discussed, tribes have traditionally intervened in almost any incidence of communal or political conflict, tribal elders seeking to mediate cease-fires and peace agreements. Although rarely effective at stopping fighting directly, elders can open channels of communication and convene discussion sessions. Several initiatives have seen such tribal councils extend to a regional or even a national level—though some of these efforts have been politicized; some national tribal councils have dissipated under the impact of local and personal dynamics, however.

The survey data indicates stronger public support for the role that tribes play in this domain than in security and justice provision. A large majority of respondents (73 percent) nationally felt that tribal elders have an important role in ensuring harmony between different tribes, 37 percent seeing it as crucial. However, the extent that elders are perceived as successful in specific areas of conflict mediation—such as removing roadblocks and checkpoints, exchanging prisoners, and brokering cease-fires—differs markedly across areas of the country.

Respondents from Zawiya, al-Jabal al-Gharbi, and Nalut reported that local tribal elders had been highly successful in brokering prisoner exchanges. Elders from Misrata, al-Jafara, and Sabha were also reported as having enjoyed a reasonable degree of success. Tribal leaders from Murzuq and al-Jufrah appear to have been the least successful in this regard.

Elders from Wadi al-Shati, Nalut, and al-Jabal al-Gharbi were perceived as most successful in brokering cease-fires, and their counterparts from al-Jufrah, Benghazi, Sirte, and Sabha as the least successful.

Although rarely effective at stopping fighting directly, elders can open channels of communication and convene discussion sessions.

Nationwide, responses indicate that tribal leaders have had less success in removing roadblocks and checkpoints, with the exception of Wadi al-Haya', al-Marj, and al-Wahat, where 63 percent, 60 percent, and 54 percent of respondents, respectively, reported that tribal elders had succeeded in removing roadblocks and checkpoints (see figures 22, 23, and 24).

In Tobruk, Bani Walid, and Sabha, tribal councils have all convened to mediate both local and national conflicts and to arrange prisoner exchanges. In Bani Walid, the WSC is the vehicle for all such efforts. It has also convened regional gatherings of tribal leaders from central and southern areas; these gatherings have been used as opportunities to call for the tribes to unite to press for the introduction of national amnesties, for the release of prisoners, and for an end to the marginalization of particular communities.

In Tobruk, 81 percent of respondents believed that elders play a significant role in pacifying relations among tribes. Perceived success in removing roadblocks and checkpoints was significantly higher than the national average, success in brokering cease-fires was slightly higher, and success in exchanging prisoners was somewhat lower (see figure 25).

Sabha, unlike Tobruk, experiences regular intertribal violence. Nonetheless, the public in Sabha is as likely as that in Tobruk to consider the use of elders as mediators to be legitimate. More than three out of four respondents from Sabha considered that elders contribute to pacifying relations among tribes, and 64 percent that "tribes should help the state administration in solving conflict," significantly higher than the national average of 47 percent support for this position. Perceived success in removing roadblocks and checkpoints is equal to that in Tobruk, and in exchanging prisoners far greater than in Tobruk and slightly higher than the national average. However, reports of success in brokering cease-fires is below both the national average and the figure for Tobruk, doubtlessly reflecting the significant scale of communal violence and that Sabha's tribal fabric is far more politically damaged than Tobruk's (see figure 26).

Conclusion

In Libyan politics, then, a local tribal fabric has consistently attempted to shape the leadership, staffing, structure, and direction of security and justice actors, as well as their ability to provide services. The companion to this report demonstrates how political currents in Libya since 2011 have shaped policing and security actors on the ground. Together, the two reports suggest that policing and security institutions in Libya are subject to a confluence of both political and tribal dynamics, political currents and divisions alternatively co-opting and reinforcing historic social and tribal divisions—and vice versa.

In Tobruk, a stable tribal order based on a master-client dynamic, the al-Ubaidat tribe firmly in charge, has survived the revolution. As a result, policing and security services are effective within Tobruk, though limited by capacity and the partnerships that the services have had to form with tribal actors. On the national level, however, Tobruk's policing and security services are clearly politicized in line with the al-Ubaidat's aspirations to steer the country's security institutions in a direction favorable to Tobruk—which is indicated in the police and security services' support of Haftar's Operation Dignity. Partnerships between the al-Ubaidat tribe and client tribes such as the al-Qut'an in the region have held, offering a modicum of regional stability.

In Bani Walid, the revolution provoked an internal attempt within the Warfalla to overthrow the established tribal leadership. Those seeking power were pro-revolutionary, whereas the established leadership was anti-revolutionary; consequently, although the established leadership survived, it did so at the cost of rejecting state policing and security

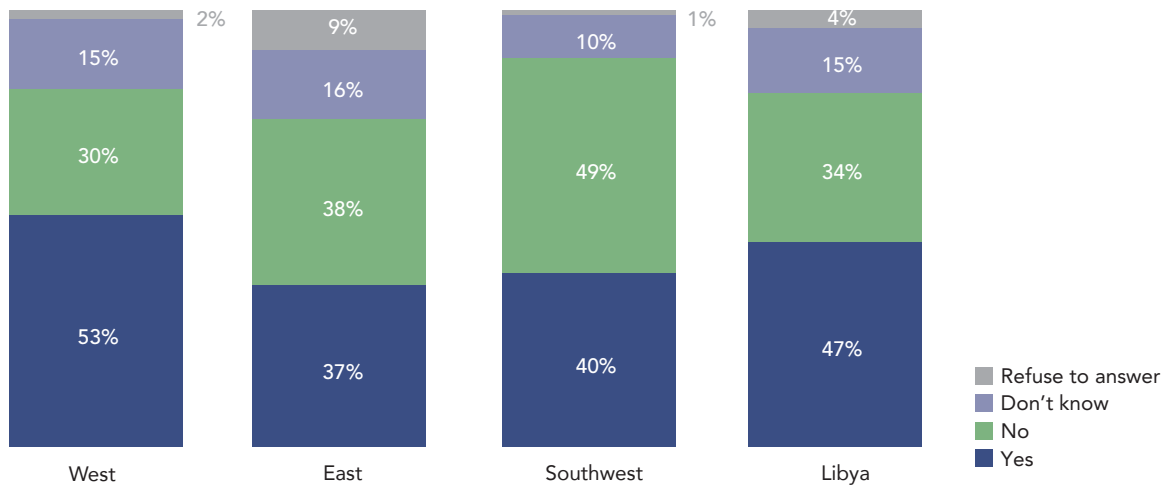**Figure 22. Have tribal elders in your area successfully brokered cease-fires? (n=979, by region)**

Figure 23. Have tribal elders in your area successfully removed roadblocks and checkpoints? (n=979, by region)
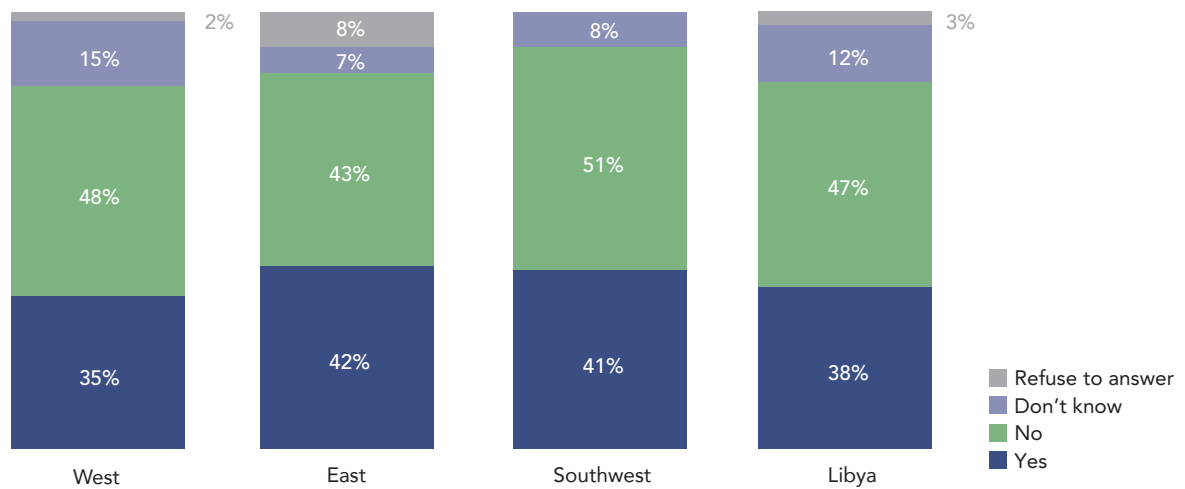

Figure 24. Have tribal elders in your area successfully brokered prisoner exchanges? (n=979, by region)
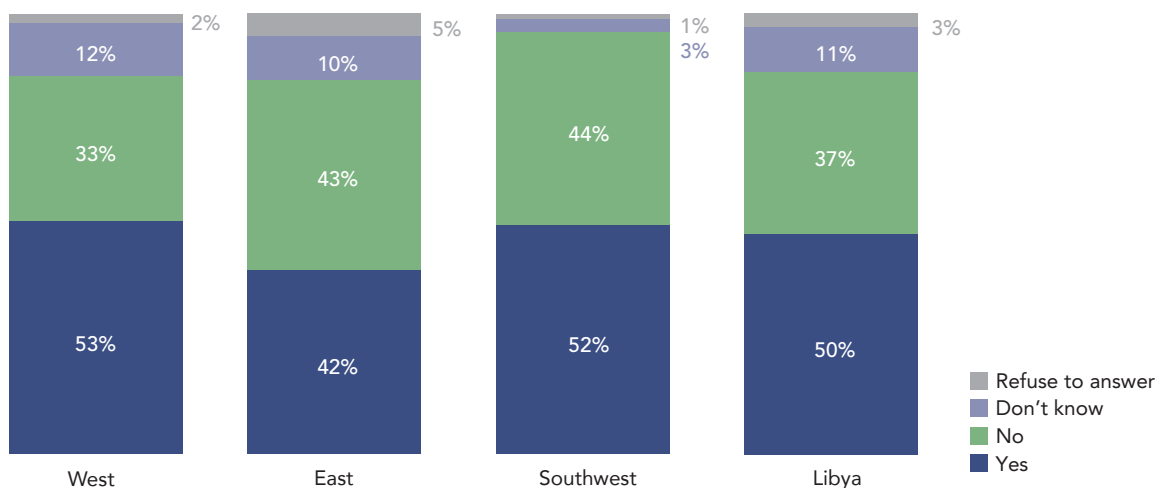
Figure 25. Did elders in your area succeed in… (n=22, Tobruk; n=979, Libya)
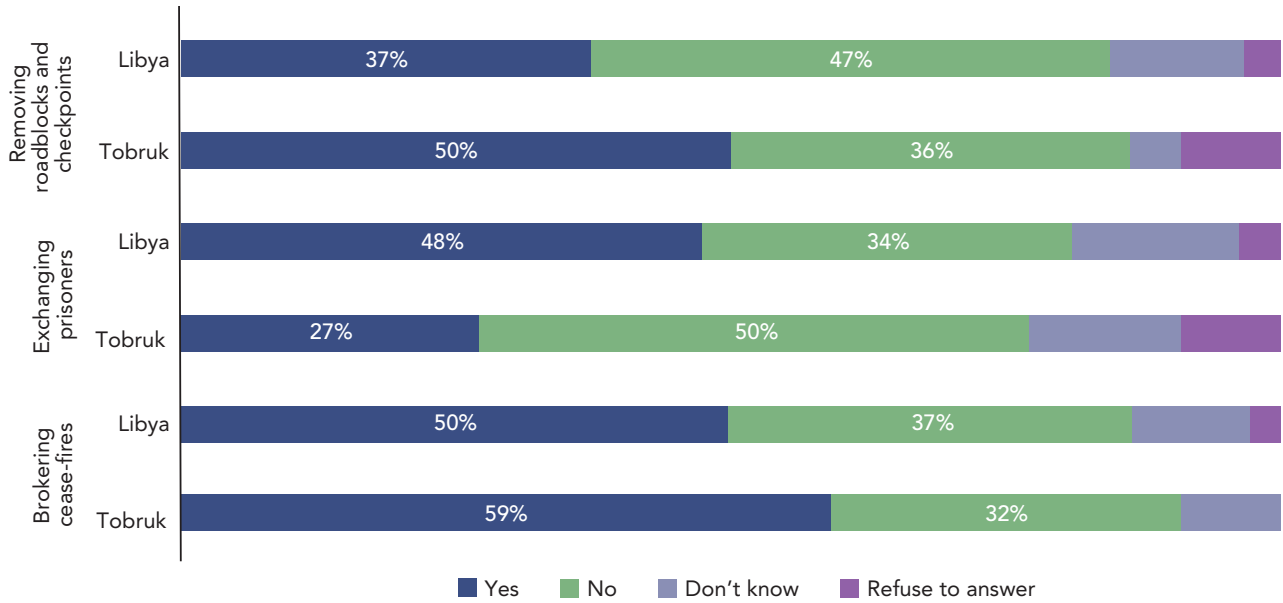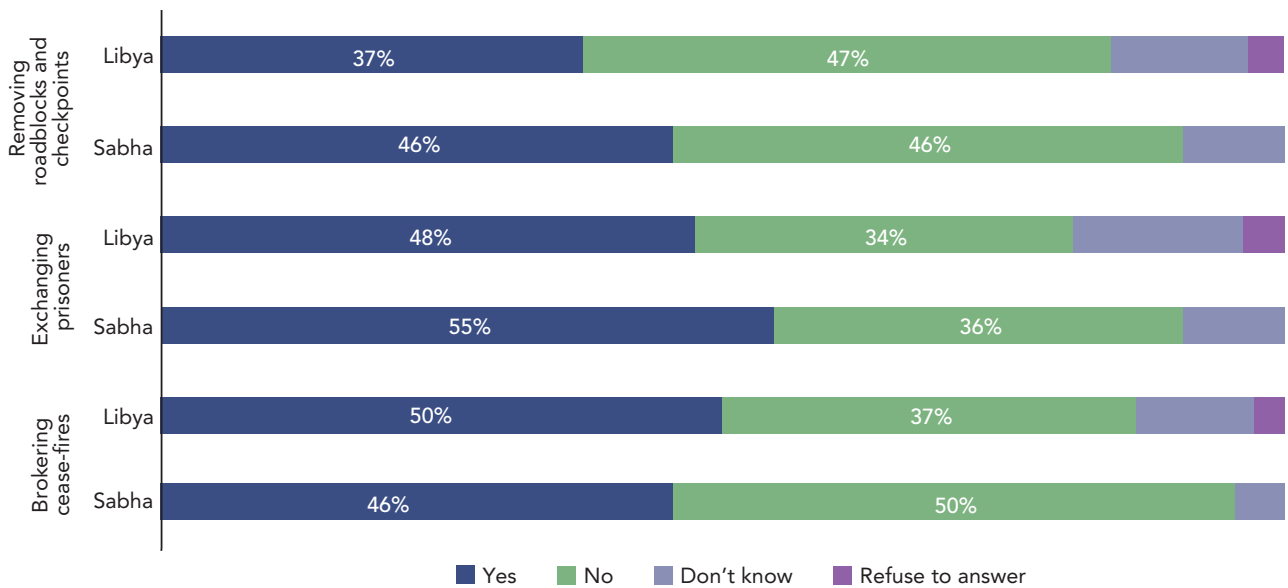

Figure 26. Did elders in your area succeed in… (n=22, Sabha; n=979, Libya)

institutions. All such services are now handled through a tribal structure named the Warfalla Social Council, which has some capability to ensure stability locally but only limited capability (and that based primarily on negotiation) to provide policing and protect the town from its neighbors, Misrata, and the Islamic State.

In Sabha, as in Bani Walid, the revolution inspired an attempt to overthrow the established tribal order. Unlike in Bani Walid, however, in Sabha, where the old order was based on a coalition headed by minor tribes (mainly the Qadhadhfa and Magharha), that attempt was successful. The Awlad Sulaiman, the area's pre-Gadhafi-era historic tribal leaders, established command over all major policing institutions. In doing so, they provoked intercommunal violence, and so found it necessary to shore up security by establishing external alliances with the Misratan Third Force. The Third Force has managed to reestablish some essential elements of security, but the tribalized nature of policing institutions has led to a tribal zoning of the city. The inability to police much of the area has been only partly addressed by a reliance on Salafist currents whose religious values override purely narrow tribal affiliations.

Outside the political space, the political machinations of tribal notables are a remote reality for most Libyans, who evince clear and unambiguous preferences for neutral state policing and justice provision. Libyans recognize the genealogical heritage of tribes and call on their network of sheikhs and elders, but only in extreme circumstances. If tribes are becoming more prominent than usual, therefore, it is because the social and political fragmentation of the country is placing more and more Libyans in extreme circumstances.

Within the current transitional security and justice environment, Libyans are more comfortable—as the case studies attest—with tribal intervention in the areas of mediation and pacification, indicating that they see a legitimate role for tribal authorities in mediating disputes, arranging prisoner exchanges, and negotiating social order issues such as roadblocks and checkpoints. However, to succeed in such negotiations, mediators need a functioning tribal order behind them so that the agreements they broker will be implemented and respected. Where the tribal order has collapsed into violence, as in Sabha, tribal mediators are seen as having limited success in making agreements stick; in stable Tobruk, however, they are perceived as having been more successful.

What conclusions does this study offer for future security and justice models in Libya? It is important to separate Libya's current interim circumstances from its long-term security and stability prospects. One conclusion is that, when it comes to peace and security, Libyans are comfortable with tribal mediation as an interim stopgap measure as long as the state remains in crisis. However, continued political polarization poses risks to successful tribal mediation efforts. If Libya continues its national-level civil war (as opposed to local tribal wars), then finding ways to support tribal elders in negotiating, signing, and implementing local cease-fires in the face of efforts by spoilers to stoke conflict is a reasonable goal for future engagement.

Given citizens' clear desire for security and justice institutions and for actors that conduct their work independently of tribal influence, Libya must move to defactionalize security and justice services, a process that will include detribalizing them in many localities. Eradicating tribal interests from state services, however, is a goal that has eluded Libyan governors and statebuilders since before the Ottoman Empire. Many detribalization efforts failed because they sought merely to elevate certain tribes over others. Moving forward, security and justice reform must instead seek to create tribal balance if it is to ensure that state institutions are broadly representative of the Libyan populace.

Outside the political space, the political machinations of tribal notables are a remote reality for most Libyans, who evince clear and unambiguous preferences for neutral state policing and justice provision.

Additionally, even though tribal interests are being served by tribes exerting influence over state institutions, the notables interviewed spoke of being overburdened and expressed little desire to be responsible for every conceivable security matter in their area. If this sentiment is widespread, then tribes may be readier than observers perhaps assume for the state to reassert control—or at least some level of control. Careful negotiation between the state and the tribes might help to tip control of security and justice services back toward the state.

As part of any reform effort, consideration should be given to educating Libyans on how other countries manage the dynamic between tribes and state security and justice institutions, and on how policing services can be depoliticized amid a civil war. The work of creating a truly mixed system with a national rather than partisan focus must be undertaken at the ministerial level and institutional level. This work will not be possible, however, until a successful political agreement has been reached and the current warring over control of these functions has ceased.

In the judicial arena, tribes have stepped in to assist where the judiciary are significantly constrained in their work by colossal pressure from backlog of pending cases, security threats, and salary issues. This tribal intervention has not been driven solely by a concern to help the judiciary function more effectively; tribes are certainly interested in taking advantage of the current situation to divert cases involving their members away from the formal court system and into tribal channels. Nonetheless, the survey data indicate that though Libyans acknowledge the potential for tribes to play a role in supporting the judiciary, the majority would rather rely on a state justice system than turn to tribal arbitration or customary law. Dialogue with notables and civil society leaders could help identify where and how this support could best be rendered. Tribal elders' expertise in mediation, for instance, could be fruitfully used by an institutionalized alternative dispute resolution mechanism, which could reduce the burden on the courts by diverting certain types of cases into mediation channels, as has become a common practice in numerous countries.

In sum, since the revolution, tribes have asserted themselves within Libya's fractious security, justice, and peacemaking space. Tribal influence in this space, however, is not new; it has always been there, albeit to varying degrees. What has occurred since the revolution is a surge in tribal influence in the provision of security and justice in response to the collapse of the state. And as tribal involvement has grown, so has the impact of intertribal power dynamics on who exactly provides security and justice in each area of the country, and how they do so. Libyans recognize this reality and acknowledge that tribes can play positive roles. Nonetheless, Libyans overwhelmingly desire a security and justice system provided by the state and independent of tribal influence. As Libya seeks to rebuild and move beyond its history of colonization, coups, and conflict, reform efforts must draw on tribal expertise and experience in peacemaking and negotiation, bearing in mind what modern tribalism really means to Libyans. Reform efforts that do this and are infused with the principles of democracy and equality can help shape a new security and justice sector for a new Libya.

Appendix A. Research Methodology

USIP worked with Altai Consulting on this research project. The methodology involved a combination of key informant interviews, public opinion sampling drawn from national survey results, and a thorough review of literature and open-source media data in English, Arabic, and French. Where relevant, targeted media monitoring and analysis were also included. Qualitative data was gathered through an iterative process of collection followed by review and analysis, leveraging Altai's network of key informants, researchers, and experts.

Key Informant Interviews

Key informant interviews (or elite interviews, in social sciences terminology) are those selected on the basis of their knowledge who normally but not always have decision-making power or were or are participants in events. Altai Consulting has local coordinators in Libya who enable research to be supplemented by an extensive network of key informants:

- government officials,
- heads of state security and justice institutions,
- armed group leaders,
- leaders of women's organizations,
- heads of municipal councils,
- heads of tribal entities,
- heads of reconciliation committees,
- civil society actors,
- Libyan and international media,
- private-sector actors,
- independent experts and academics, and
- officials and experts within the international community.

Key informant interviewing has methodological limitations: sample sets are highly limited; interviews are generally semi-structured or unstructured; interviewers must accommodate interviewees' wishes on topics of discussion; and interview time is limited and interviewees sometimes cannot be reached to confirm or clarify points. Above all, information provided is not necessarily objective and may omit key facts.

To address these issues, it is critical to triangulate between categories of key informant interviews with people of different gender and from different ideological and professional backgrounds. A report focused on the impact of conflict on women, for instance, would triangulate between key informant interviews with heads of women's rights nongovernmental organizations (NGOs); women's associations; local councils; international personnel working on gender issues in Libya, including in the United Nations; and foreign embassies and NGOs. Key informant interviews help confirm conclusions drawn from other research that are unsupported elsewhere, give necessary additional insights into the interpretation of data, and ensure that a wider range of views and opinions are consulted.

Key informant interviews are carried out in person where the situation allows (such as in Tunis or Tripoli), or by telephone or Skype. Interviewees are not bound to objectivity but are aware of the purposes of research and agree to be interviewed on that basis and with the understanding that information given will not be made public outside the context of the report.

Given the cultural and political context, the confidentiality involved, and personal nature of key informant interviews, the use of written or signed agreements or statements of purpose has not been required so far.

Open-Source Media Monitoring and Literature Reviews

Monitoring and analysis of Libyan media relevant to the topic or geographical focus are conducted by the media monitoring team to provide the lead researcher with an additional source of information.

Extensive review of secondary literature of relevance to the topic or geographical focus, including news reports and academic literature, is conducted during the preparatory research phase to complement primary information collection.

Public Opinion Sampling

To supplement findings from the key informant interviews, surveys, and media monitoring, public opinion sampling may also be conducted. Sampling entails conducting in-depth interviews with ordinary Libyans through Altai's Libyan partner Istishari. The approach to these in-depth interviews depends heavily on the topic, aims, and geographical focus of the specific report. Emphasis is usually placed on sampling from a wide representation of gender, ethnic-tribal, ideological, and professional backgrounds.

Respondent recruitment for in-depth interviews draws on two methods:

- Street intercept. In locations with a relatively permissive security environment, local (Libyan) Altai fieldwork coordinators locate themselves in a public space (such as a shopping mall, park, or square), and ask random members of the public if they would be prepared to participate in an in-depth interview. The fieldwork coordinators then ask the respondent a predefined series of open-ended questions, either recording the responses using a Dictaphone or smartphone, or noting them on paper.

- Snowball approach. Snowballing identifies a promising starting point for recruiting in-depth interview respondents, and from there secures permission for in-depth interviews through a process of introductions and referrals. Such interviews are conducted in person by a local (Libyan) Altai fieldwork coordinator, or by phone, depending on the situation.

Appendix B. Glossary

Al-Ubaidat. The dominant Sa'da tribe in Tobruk, present in the region since the eighteenth century.

Awlad Sulaiman. A key Arab tribe inhabiting Sabha and southern Libya which at times ruled the region, and supported Gadhafi during his regime. The Awlad Sulaiman has sought to reassert itself as the dominant tribe in Sabha since the revolution by allying with Misrata.

Notables. A term for local elites with decision-making power over local affairs. It covers various Libyan Arabic words denoting this social class, including *'a'yan* (those highly visible), *wujaha'* (well-known faces), *hukama'* (local authorities or decision makers), ulema (scholars), *shuyukh* (sheikhs), *kibar al-sinn* (elders), and *qiyada ijtima'iyya* (social leadership), and others.

Misrata. A seaport town in western Libya that is politically and militarily predominant due to its high militarization and amassing of weaponry during the 2011 revolution. Misrata is a collection of 250–300 clans, most with Turkic and Caucasian genealogies, as well as a significant Murabitin Arab heritage.

Murabitin. The Murabitin ("those who are attached") are a class of Libyan Arab tribes whose genealogies branch off from the original Arab migrants into Libya, usually because they have non-Arab or indigenous heritage in their genealogy. Because of their mixed heritage, they are often socially subordinate to Sa'da tribes.

Sa'da. The name given to those Arab tribes that trace their genealogies to the first Arab migrations into Libya and beyond that to the days of the Prophet and his companions. These tribes often have a martial culture; many owe their positions in Libyan society to military conquests by their ancestors.

Security Directorate. The Gadhafi regime's equivalent of a police force, comprising both a General Security Directorate in Tripoli and local branches.

Warfalla. The only tribe in Bani Walid, the Warfalla tribe was established through the social linkage of families over time rather than through bloodline. Significant political division emerged in 2011 between pro-revolutionary and anti-revolutionary strands in the tribe.

Notes

1. Helen Chapin Metz, *Libya: A Country Study* (Washington DC: Library of Congress Federal Research Division, 1989).

2. Albert Hourani, *A History of the Arab Peoples* (London: Faber & Faber, 1991), 198.

3. The main historic event was the Hilalian invasion, a migration of several tribes, chiefly the Bani Hilal and Bani Salim, from the Arabian Peninsula into North Africa during the eleventh and twelfth centuries. However, internal North African wars between Arab tribes meant that conquests and displacement continued well into the nineteenth century. See "Hilaliens," *Encyclopédie berbère* (Aix-en-Provence: Edisud, 2000), 3465–68; Jean Poncet, "Le mythe de la 'catastrophe' hilalienne," *Civilisations* 22, no. 5 (1967): 1099–120. The Egyptian historian Hasan Ibrahim Hasan notes the examples of the proto-state Idrisid dynasty in Morocco and Hammudid in Andalusia, both Sharif Arab peoples operating in a Berber environment and who adopted the Berber language. T*arikh al-Islam al-Siyasi wal-Dini wal-Thaqafi wal-Ijtima'i* (Cairo, 1964), 184–93. Similar examples are available in Libya. See Ibrahim Kamali, Sukkan Tarabulus al-Gharb (Tripoli: Centre for Libyan Jihad Studies, 1991), 143. On Berber roots in Zintan, an Arab town, for example, see Auguste Cauneille, "Le semi-nomadisme dans l'Ouest libyen (Fezzan, Tripolitaine)," in *Nomades et Nomadismes au Sahara* (Paris: UNESCO, 1963).

4. Faraj Najem, *Tribe, Islam and State in Libya: Analytical Study of the Roots of Libyan Tribal Society and its Evolution up to the Qaramanli Reign* (Cairo: Al Azhar, 2003), 216–25.

5. See Dirk Vandewalle, *A History of Modern Libya* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 15–17.

6. Ali Abd al-Latif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994), 51–44, 117–32.

7. See, for example, the discussion in Andrew Shryock, *Nationalism and the Genealogical Imagination: Oral History and Textual Authority in Tribal Jordan* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997). Shryock argues that the meaning of the word tribe itself has been distorted by early anthropological works, which attempted to translate complex social networks into easily understood and discrete units of analysis.

8. This segmentation, as anthropologists termed it, was used to explain how society could be divided according to agreed notions of common ancestry yet not dissolve into perpetual warfare. For a Libya-focused discussion, see Emrys L. Peters, "The Proliferation of Segments in the Lineage of the Bedouin of Cyrenaica," *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland* 90, no. 1 (1960): 29–53. A more general regional overview can be found in Dale F. Eichkelman, *The Middle East: An Anthropological Approach*, 2nd ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1989).

9. For a discussion of Libyan tribes in this political sense, see Wolfram Lacher, "The Rise of Tribal Politics" in *The 2011 Libyan Uprisings and the Struggle for the Post–Gadhafi Future*, ed. Jason Pack (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 151–73.

10. In Libyan Arabic, a variety of terms are used for this political category that translate roughly as notables. Examples include *wujaha'* (prominent persons), *'a'yan*, (visible members of the community), *hukama'* (decision makers), *kibar al-sinn* (elders), and others. In all cases, it is the same category of persons being described, though individuals counted in that category may change.

11. This phrase, from the title of an influential essay by Albert Hourani, "Ottoman Reform and the Politics of Notables," was coined to describe a kind of local politics within the Ottoman Empire that arose "first, when society is ordered to relations of personal dependence… secondly, when society is dominated by urban notables, by great families which… reside mainly in the city, draw their main strength from there, and because of their position in the city are able to dominate also a rural hinterland; and, thirdly, when these notables have some freedom of political action. This freedom may be of two kinds. The city may be self-governing… or else the city may be subject to a monarchical power, but one on which the urban population wishes and is able to impose limits or exercise influence." *The Modern Middle East: Revised Edition*, ed. Albert Hourani and Phillip Khoury (New York: L. B. Tauris, 2004), 87.

12. Ibid., 87–88.

13. Ibid., 89–91.

14. See "Divided We Stand: Libya's Enduring Conflicts," *Crisis Group Middle East/North Africa Report* no. 130 (Brussels: International Crisis Group, 2012), 39.

15. See Lisa Anderson, *Tribe and State: Libyan Anomalies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 218. Many histories of Libya prior to Gadhafi document the influence tribes played over early state formation. For representative examples, see Emrys L. Peters, *The Bedouin of Cyrenaica* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); E. Evans Pritchard, *The Sanusi of Cyrenaica* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1949); and Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya: State Formation, Colonization, and Resistance*, 2nd ed. (New York: State University of New York Press, 2009).

16. Omar I. El Fathaly and Monte Palmer, *Political Development and Social Change in Libya* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 1980), 58.

17. The seminal articulation on Libyan tribalism in this period is John Davies, *Libyan Politics: Tribe and Revolution* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1987), an anthropological account based on two years' participant

observation of the Zway and Magharba in Ajdabiya and the frustrations Gadhafi's regime experienced in interfacing with local notables and penetrating tribal substructures. The resulting book, drawn from Davies' field notes, defies summation, but consequently is the fullest account available of tribe-state relations under Gadhafi.

18. Gadhafi's ideal of a *jamahiriya* was a unique creation that drew on Gamal Abdal Nasser's variant of socialism and Islamic philosophy, and tried to adapt both to Libyan society. Its key characteristic was that society would possess no governing institutions, no political system based on representation, and no "exploitation" of "wage-earners" to accumulate capital (see also Vandewalle, *History of Modern Libya*).

19. Ibid.

20. Omar El Fathaly and Monte Palmer, "The Transformation of the Elite Structure of Revolutionary Libya," in *Social and Economic Development of Libya*, ed. George H. Joffé and Keith Stanley McLachlan (Ann Arbor, MI: Middle East and North African Studies Press, 1982), 255–79.

21. El Fathaly and Palmer, *Political Development and Social Change in Libya*, 58; see also Davis, *Libyan Politics*, 23.

22. On the incorporation of tribalism into Gadhafi's ideology, see Igor Cherstich, "When Tribesmen Do Not Act Tribal: Libyan Tribalism as Ideology (Not as Schizophrenia)," *Middle East Critique* 23, no. 4 (2014): 405–21, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2014.969890.

23. Ibid. 5; see also Amal Obeidi, *Political Culture in Libya* (Richmond, UK: Curzon, 2001), 118.

24. See Peter Cole, "Bani Walid: Loyalism in a Time of Revolution," in *The Libyan Revolution and Its Aftermath*, ed. Peter Cole and Brian McQuinn (London: Hurst, 2015), 291–94.

25. Davis, *Libyan Politics*, 40–44.

26. This phenomenon is discussed further in the other case studies, which demonstrate a lack of shared political interests even when a tribe is widely believed to be politically aligned. In Tobruk, for example, the al-Ubaidat tribe had vested interests in the prerevolutionary security establishment, yet members of the tribe sided with political Islamic and other anti-establishment forces, and one Ubaidat figure even tried to overturn the establishment in Tobruk. In Bani Walid, tribal elites sided with Gadhafi in the revolution, whereas lower-born families and heads joined the revolution, provoking bloodshed and unrest in the town. In Sabha, tribal youth are recruited into armed groups with a variety of ideological and political alignments.

27. Najem, *Tribe, State and Islam in Libya*.

28. See Obeidi, *Political Culture in Libya*, 116, 108–33; see also Obeidi, "Political Culture in Libya: A Case Study of Political Attitudes of University Students" (Ph.D. diss., Durham University, 1996).

29. Cherstich, "When Tribesmen Do Not Act Tribal," 10.

30. Indeed, many analysts and observers of Libya have noted that ambivalence or even antipathy on the subject of tribalism influences Libyans' analysis of political events. Wolfram Lacher notes "much controversy among observers over the role of tribal allegiances" ("Families, Tribes and Cities in the Libyan Revolution," *Middle East Policy Council* 18, no. 4). For both sides of the case, Lacher cites Abdelsattar Hatiti, "Al-Kharita al-Qibtiyya al-Libya," *Al-Sharq al-Awsat,* February 2011; and Mansour El-Kikhia and Abli Abdullatif Ahmida, quoted in William Maclean, "In Libya's New Politics, Localism May Trump Tribes," Reuters, September 23, 2011.

31. The al-Ubaidat were substantively represented in eastern military and security institutions. The decisions of these commanders not to respond to Gadhafi's orders—whose decisions were personal, though made in consultation with a range of actors including tribal leaders—is what is meant here. Specifically, certain defections were critical: of Sulaiman Mahmud al-Ubaidi, who controlled the Tobruk port and Marsa al-Hriqa oil terminal; of Abd al-Fattah Yunis, who because of his long service to Gadhafi controlled the security brigade stationed in Benghazi; and of Libyan Air Force personnel stationed at Gamal Abdul Nasser airbase. The actions of these individuals contributed to Tobruk's siding with the National Transitional Council and other rebel cities in the east.

32. Najem, *Tribe, State and Islam in Libya*, 216–21. Najem translates "al-Ubaidat" as "al-Ibidat"; both variants are justifiable according to various transliteration conventions for Modern Standard and dialect Arabic.

33. Enrico De Augustus, *Popolazione della Cirenaica* (Tripoli: Pirotta & Bresciano, 1923), available in translation by Ibrahim Ahmad al-Mahdawi as *Sukkan Barqa* (Benghazi: Qar Yunis University, 1998).

34. Peters, *Bedouin of Cyrenaica.*

35. De Augustus, *Popolazione della Cirenaica.*

36. For example, in June 2015, when a family of the Mnaffa tribe gifted a small plot of land to key heads of security institutions, all of whom were al-Ubaidat. See "Qabilat al-Mnaffa bi-Bi'r al-Ashhab tamnah qit'at ard lil-jaish al-Libi," *Akhbar Libya*, June 20, 2015, http://bit.ly/24Zkck7.

37. According to one officer from the Masamir tribe, who had been a member of the former Internal Security Apparatus, "We have information concerning everyone, including all the representatives of the HoR [House of Representatives]."

38. Najem, *Tribe, State and Islam in Libya*, 211.

39. Cole, "Bani Walid," 292.

40. See Wolfram Lacher, "Libya's Local Elites and the Politics of Alliance Building," *Mediterranean Politics* 21, no. 1 (2016): 73–76. This step was taken under the leadership of the Sa'adi notable Muhammad al-Barghouti, and was deputized by a law professor at Bani Walid University, Miftah Ijbara. At some point, leadership of the WSC passed from Barghouti to Salih Mayouf.

41. A prominent tribal notable interviewed in June 2015 confirmed the presence of the Islamic State in Bani Walid as well as in the neighboring towns in central Libya. He asserted that "negotiations are ongoing" between the WSC and Islamic State. These reports were echoed in telephone interviews with domestic security officials focused on countering radicalization based in Tripoli and Tobruk.

42. Bani Walid was classified geographically as within Misrata's municipality, and because respondents were not obliged to disclose their tribal affiliation or location, 1``it was often unclear which respondents were from Bani Walid.

43. Ali Abdullatif Ahmida, *The Making of Modern Libya,* 51–54, 117–32.

44. Auguste Cauneille, "Le Nomadisme des Zentân (Tripolitaine et Fezzân)," *Travaux de l'Institut de Recherches Sahariennes* 16 (1957): 73–99.

45. Al-Amin Muhammad Ma'izi, *Sukkan Fazzan: Dirasa Wasfiya Qadiman Wa-hadithan [Hadarat al-sahara, Vol. 1]* (Tripoli, 2005). See also Enrico De Augustus, *Popolazione della Tripolitania* (Tripoli: Pirotta & Bresciano, 1917), available in translation by Ibrahim Ahmad al-Mahdawi as *Sukkan Tarabulus* (Benghazi: Qar Yunis University, 1998).

46. See "Misratan-led forces take control of Military Barracks and Airport in Sabha," *Libya Herald*, November 4, 2014.

Governance in Libya has long been handled by tribal leaders rather than a central authority. Tribalism, though, has evolved over the centuries, initially in response to outside powers and more recently to internal circumstances. Since the 2011 revolution that ousted Muammar Gadhafi, one international debate has focused on the extent to which tribal identity mobilizes groups socially and politically. If tribes are more prominent, perhaps it is because the social and political fragmentation of the country has put more and more Libyans in extreme circumstances. An uneasy relationship between state authority and independent local authorities with de facto power explains in large part why local Libyan leaderships want state security services but also wish to dominate or control those services. This report analyzes what tribe means in Libya today; the impact of tribalism on security, justice, and peacemaking; and how Libyans perceive the role of tribe versus state in these areas.

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