Question (R3 QL5): *Following the clearance of Da'esh from both Mosul and Raqqah, and beyond that any remaining substantive elements in the Euphrates River Valley, what governing structure is most likely to be effective, and acceptable to the predominant tribes?*

Contributors: Dr. Kathleen Reedy (RAND); Siree D. Allers (Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, Department of State); Murhaf Jouejati (National Defense University); Lina Khatib (Chatham House, UK); Amjed Rasheed (Durham University, UK); Mubin Shaikh (University of Liverpool; independent consultant); Dr. Gwyneth Sutherlin (Geographic Services, Inc.); Bilal Wahab (The Washington Institute); Dr. Joshua Landis (University of Oklahoma).

Executive Summary

Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois, NSI

Acceptable Governance

A governing system or structure is essentially a fixed distribution of power. At its core, governance is about the span of authority and who distributes public goods, and stable governance is not so much a function of which groups benefit from a system as of the tolerance of those who believe they do not.

Vern Liebl of the Center for Advanced Operational Culture Learning (CAOCL) has made the argument elsewhere[1] that there really is no such thing as an "ungoverned space." The implication is that whether or not it is contested, power is distributed in some way and there is some authority in charge if only over a small area within a larger region. Everyone, in other words is subject to at least one – sometimes more than one -- governing authority. The point is that some form of governing is happening across Syria whether this is the formal governance of the Assad regime, fighter group control, kinship-based groups or local committees and councils working to distribute relief aid and provide security.

Any "acceptable" form of governance has a cultural element reflecting what constituents perceive as the appropriate relationship between the individual or group and authority, and a more pragmatic element which has to do with the value to the group or individual of the "goods" a governing authority provides. The relationship between the cultural and pragmatic factors is not static; in some instances or for some periods value on one can compensate for deficits on the other (e.g., a culturally relevant structure such as a *shura* can be acceptable even if it is not able to produce significant security or employment; a newer system like a federation may be seen as acceptable if it can deliver meaningful security and employment benefits.)

The Question

The question posed for this Reach-back report appears to be premature considering the rapidly evolving conflict environment in Syria. To answer it satisfactorily we need to know who are the important leaders in the area currently, and whether there are others who would lay claim to

[1] See SMA Reach-back report R3 QL 7: *How does Da'esh's transition to insurgency manifest itself in Syria; which other jihadist groups might offer the potential for merger and which areas of ungoverned space are most likely to offer conditions conducive for Da'esh to maintain some form of organizational structure and military effectiveness?*

the area once the ISIL threat has been controlled. We need to recognize the current power brokers – what is there now – what is incentivizing their actions now and what they hope to gain or regain in the future. Consider that what might be a widely acceptable (and thus more likely durable) governing structure to replace what is currently present could decrease the power currently held by some leaders. Very few leaders respond well to arrangements that curtail their power or authority. Even fair division of assets like territory, political power, oil revenue, etc. among groups represents a loss for those who currently control them. Finally, situations in which political actors willingly give up power to a higher authority demand a significant amount of trust that others will not use this to their disadvantage but will abide by similar rules. At present this level of trust appears to exist only within relatively small groups in Syria and Iraq.

Nevertheless, the expert contributors to this report do suggest dynamics that may serve as guideposts in future analyses of the most likely paths to stable and legitimate governance in Syria and Iraq.

1) The tribe may not be the most important political influence group

While there are many areas of agreement among the contributors, a list of "prominent tribes" is not one of them. The authors list different tribes and clans as power brokers in Eastern Syria and Iraq and it is not necessarily the case that tribes whose names have historical prestige have political power today. Tribes are neither monolithic nor homogenous. It has not been uncommon for clans within tribes to take opposing sides in the various civil and counter-ISIL fights going on in Syria. When it comes to what might be acceptable governing structures, a number of the experts suggest that the tribe is not the most appropriate level of control in all locations, and thus not the most appropriate target of efforts to identify the requisites for post-ISIL governance. Siree Allers of the State Department Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations explains that the tribe is "an unreliable unit for understanding allegiances" both in Dayr az Zawr and Raqqah where "clan and sub-clan loyalties are more likely to shape local conflict dynamics." Similarly Lund (2015)[2] argues that tribal groups are not "functioning social units" and that affiliations are more local along "family, sub-clan and village lines" than tribal. In short kinship ties remain important links in influence networks it is just that the most crucial may be at the tribe, clan or relatively small family units.

2) Relationships between and within groups are fluid; impacted by material concerns

As has historically been the case in the tribal areas of Syria and Iraq, intra and inter-family, clan and tribal conflict is endemic. Josh Landis among others notes that many of the relationships among kinship groups and civil society and opposition groups are fluid, citing as a recent example local leaders who have retreated from overt opposition to the regime or re-sworn allegiance in order to hedge their bets on the likelihood that the Assad regime will return to their areas with the defeat of ISIL. In addition to the pragmatic desire to align with what is perceived as the stronger side, Lund (2015)[3] observes two reasons for "side-switching": a desire for better defense, and a desire for better pay. In fact, these have been consistent issues throughout the conflict in Syria and give us a clue as to what may inform public perceptions of future governors. Namely, at least in the short run, to be seen as effective (and retain public

[2] Lund, Aron. What's Behind the Kurdish-Arab Clashes in East Syria? Carnegie Middle East Center, 23 January 2015; http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/58814.

[3] Lund, Aron. What's Behind the Kurdish-Arab Clashes in East Syria? Carnegie Middle East Center, 23 January 2015; http://carnegie-mec.org/diwan/58814.

support), a governing body must provide at least two types of goods to constituents: security and employment.

3) To date there is no common vision of post-Assad Syria

Factionalism among Sunni populations in the tribal areas precludes a near-term "fix" to governance – regardless of what structure or process is chosen – because there is no clear vision among kinship and/or other groups of Syria following the defeat of Assad. Moreover, groups with stable leader-constituent relationships (i.e., groups that see a leader as a legitimate protector of their interests and thus will adhere to his authority) are likely smaller in size and number than would be needed to govern apolitical unit like a city. The implication for political transformation and stabilization: start small and with narrow expectations. Here Syria expert Lina Khatib of Chatham House (the Royal Institute of International Affairs) offers sage advice: barring full regional independence, "we shouldn't forget that decentralization is still based on the existence of a credible center."

4) "Acceptability" changes with location

Related to the points above, many of the expert contributors were careful to note that the relative influence of a tribe, clan, family or civil society leader differs according to the experiences in different locations *and at different times*. For example, while leaders of the *Al Waldah* clan played a significant role in expelling the regime and administered Raqqa after 2013, many fled to Turkey when ISIL moved in. Others (e.g., *Al Afadlah*) stayed in the area if not in the fight. Once ISIL is removed, it is not clear that former governors who sat out in Turkey will return with the same political authority and legitimacy that they had when they left. Similarly, Sirree Allers (DoS) posits that kinship ties are more important to political outcomes in Raqqa than in (more cosmopolitan) Mosul and surrounding areas in Ninewah which she believes are "likely to accept the local council structure that existed before."[4] Like Kathleen Reedy (Rand), Lina Khatib (Chatham House) argues further that the basic roles of tribes in Syria and Iraq are where the latter are, "political entities that play a role beyond their own regions, but tribes in Syria have never played a political role and it seems that this role is being parachuted on them in the fight against Da'esh."

5) Include (nearly) all local voices

Finally, a couple of the expert contributors intimate that the formal and informal governing processes that have emerged in Syria and Iraq (whether traditional or civil) may be the best bet for effectiveness and what will be seen as "acceptable."[5] If for no other reason than that many of these local committees and councils emerged more or less organically from necessity or

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[4] Allers argument is that the reason Mosul governance failed in the past was not because of the structure – which was designed to be inclusive of Sunni voices, but because both the Malaki and Abadi governments were unwilling to devolve authority beyond Baghdad. In SMA Reach-back reports V7 Allison Astorino-Courtois (NSI) found that given its span of domestic and regional political, economic and security interests, the Abadi government lacks necessary incentive to concede power to local leaders unless and until all-out civil war breaks out in Iraq.

[5] Interestingly, Allers (DoS) notes that ISIL's habit of installing foreign fighters atop governing bureaucracies in the Euphrates Valley and elsewhere may have provided an unexpected service to those attempting to stabilize local governance in the wake of ISIL defeat in the villages and main cities of the Euphrates River Valley (e.g., Dayr az Zawr, Al Mayadin, Abu Kamal). She suggests that replacing these "foreign" governors with local leaders while retaining the lower-level bureaucrats that have been running service provision and administrative offices is a way to simultaneously encourage local buy-in to the new government and maintain the expertise and continuity required to continue to provide (and expand) services in the immediate post-ISIL period.

tradition and the time and financial costs of replacing them whole cloth will be significant. As a result, Allers cautions that clans who remained – especially those newly empowered or enriched by affiliation with ISIL should not be excluded from future governance. There are two reasons for this. First, as Kathleen Reedy of Rand and previous SMA Reach-back reports like V7 note, the willingness of locals to work with ISIL in many cases has been the result of pragmatic choice rather than sympathetic beliefs or ideology. Second, newly empowered groups could play the role of spoilers if they are excluded from new-found gains and/or authority. We should not be too quick to eliminate current power-brokers or workers who administered social service or government departments for ISIL.

SME Input

Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Dr. Kathleen Reedy
Rand

The rural Sunni areas of Iraq and Syria are different scenarios, and I suspect that what passes for acceptable governing and governance in the two areas will be different based on long-term and more recent history. What the two regions share is the initial grievance that created the space for violent extremists to rise in the first place: disenfranchisement. In both instances, people in these areas remember times and have certain expectations about when a strong, centralized government worked for them rather than leaving them behind. "Social injustice" is a very powerful rallying cry, and both of these populations felt that they have lost that. In Iraq, that loss has been since 2003 with the loss of Saddam Hussein and his generally pro-Sunni policies. In Syria, the loss has been somewhat slower in the making and was almost more the loss of an ideal rather than a reality. In both cases, then, acceptable government will involve the return of inclusivity in some fashion or another. But there are nuances that will change the flavor of that.

In general, Sunni tribal sentiment is a stronger organizing factor in Iraq than in Syria, largely due to Saddam Hussein's attempts to co-opt the tribes at various points in order to secure his own power. As a result, tribal areas in Iraq are more used to some degree of independence and local decision-making, with greater levels of governance being (if informally) devolved to more local leaders in this region (a pattern perpetuated by the coalition efforts there). What this often meant was not just ability to govern, but to provide resources, meaning it was not ideological so much as very practical to support a shaykh. The proliferation of "old" shakys and ''new" shaykhs is a pretty good indicator of that, with the more traditional leaders having ideological support while the nouveau riche earned loyalty through purchasing power. This style of local-centric leadership has become even more prominent since 2003 and the subsequent years of unrest when self-reliance became more common and active persecution of Sunnis made them less interested in being part of a central regime. This recent history makes it likely that there is a greater popular expectation for power to be less centralized in Baghdad, especially with the Shi'a coalition that continues to

> "much of the governing that has happened [in Syria] since 2011 has not been a local solution, but an imposed one. This means that, unlike Iraq, eastern Syria has not really developed standing institutions based around local governments in the same way."

govern nationally. Within the region, power is likely to wind up consolidated in the hands of a few powerful people, because that is largely the political model people are familiar with, both at the tribal and broader political levels, but greater autonomy will likely remain the preferred outcome. The complication with that is the economic and bureaucratic systems of the country are in no way set up to devolve power, meaning that transition would be a complicated one, even without the political turmoil it would cause. However, long-term stability will mean having to find ways to ensure that these populations genuinely feel they have more buy in than they do now. The current political system clearly has not engendered that confidence and is unlikely to do so going forward.

Syria's tribal Sunni populations are somewhat less "tribal" in nature than their Iraqi counterparts, and were historically generally better incorporated into the bureaucratic fold of the regime, if not necessarily enfranchised in the democratic sense. A lot of this was due to the Ba'ath Party's effort in Syria where it, and eventually Hafez al-Asad, won power and support precisely because they were champions of the little guy. Early Ba'ath policy in Syria broke up a lot of major landholdings and redistributed land to precisely these rural Sunni farmers in eastern Syria. Rather than concentrating power in the hands of tribal leaders, this policy made every man more equal financially and cast the regime as the provider of resources, rather than a tribal elder. The slow loss of political support for these sorts of genuinely socialist policies eroded rural Syrians' confidence in their regime's interest in their well-being. Drought was possibly the spark that set fire to the country in 2011, but the tinder was already stacked high as rural people realized how removed they were from their government and how much it no longer provided for them in comparison to other's and what they were used to.[6] The domination of the region by Islamic State, which was Iraqi to begin with and relies more heavily on foreign fighters than any of the other rebel or insurgent groups in Syria, suggests that much of the governing that has happened there since 2011 has not been a local solution, but an imposed one. This means that, unlike Iraq, eastern Syria has not really developed standing institutions based around local governments in the same way. Given that and cultural preferences in Syria for centralized leadership, I suspect that rebuilding already-existing governing organizations and bureaucratic systems (which ultimately is the face of government for most Syrians) would be the preference rather than the more autonomous solution for Iraq. What it would have to include would be a national political solution that ensures more enfranchisement for rural populations. In this way, rural Syrian concerns are much more similar to other Syrians' concerns than is true of tribal Iraqis and the rest of Iraq and will hopefully be addressed in any political resolution to the war. Should Asad remain in power for any length of time, I imagine discontent among this population will remain high, as elsewhere, making any sort of government building challenging.

So, in short, rural tribes in Iraq are more likely to want greater autonomy and local control over resources to meet their grievances, while those in Syria are more likely to be supportive of the rebuilding of a centralized system, just one that is more responsive to them.

[6] In Syria, as in some other Middle Eastern nations, rural/urban divides are historically much more salient than any ethnic or religious ones. A similar decline in popular support for the government based on perceived "social injustice" took place in Egypt as power moved from Nasser, who was widely seen as a "man of the people," ultimately to Mubarek, who was seen as a man out for himself and his cronies.

Governing Structures in Mosul, Raqqa and Euphrates River Valley

Siree D. Allers
Conflict and Stabilization Action Officer, IEA Corp.
Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations, U.S. Department of State

Mosul, Iraq

Unlike Raqqa (population ~400,000), Mosul (population ~1.2 million) is not a predominantly tribal city. Its role as a cosmopolitan city throughout most of its history has drawn social contours along overlapping tribal, class, religious and ethnic lines. (Addendum 1) Throughout stabilization, it will be important to reach out to civil society leaders, diverse community leaders and business people. The urban populations of Mosul and surrounding tribes in Ninewa are likely to accept the local council structure that existed before; however, the transition will face greater obstacles with regard to representation and implementation.

Local v. Central Governance

The local governance that existed in northern Iraq before Daesh seized control in June 2014 failed because of the process and players, rather than structure. The governing structures in Mosul district and Ninewa province were intentionally developed after the US invasion to devolve power from the central state and ensure inclusivity through representative provincial and local assemblies. However, these structures are only as effective as the central state's willingness to concede authority and prioritize reconciliation. Since the establishment of the 2008 "provincial powers law," Baghdad has impeded provincial and local leaders from freely exercising the authorities they were legally granted. In the current political climate, Prime Minister Abadi's promises to decentralize power and integrate Sunni populations into a national guard are undermined by the recent legislation that makes Shia Popular Mobilization Forces (PMF) an official security force. Political measures such as these accommodate the Shia establishment and reaffirm minority grievances.

Other Obstacles

There are three other important factors that will determine whether a Moslawi government is successful:

> "… tribes are not monolithic; it will be just as important to help tribes reconcile internal disputes as it will be to mediate between them."

1. First, proactive reconciliation efforts in the interim period will be key to creating sustainable governing systems. It is clear that some populations worked within Daesh's system of governance and others are fighting alongside Iraqi security forces to liberate Mosul. Proactive reconciliation and mediation mechanisms will be key to bridging these divides if they are to be sustainably integrated into governance systems. Moreover, tribes are not monolithic; it will be just as important to help tribes reconcile internal disputes as it will be to mediate between them.

2. Second, stabilization efforts in Mosul will be complicated by increasing Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) maneuvering in Ninewa. Though Iraqi Security Forces and Peshmerga fight jointly against ISIS, the Government of Iraq and KRG have not discussed future

security or territorial agreements. Kurdish territorial gains in historically disputed territories bordering Mosul, on top of their pre-existing social and military influence in Ninewa, will likely become a point of contention in political negotiations and on the ground. Before 2014, pro-Kurdish groups created systems of patronage among some minority communities in Mosul, funding militias to protect them; the KRG and Iraqi government financed competing civil society organizations. These tensions are likely to manifest in different ways in Mosul in the post-conflict period.

3. Third, one of the first major challenges that a local government will face is managing the immediate and long-term needs of diverse IDPs and returnees. Reconciliation efforts that integrate property dispute mechanisms are more likely to be successful in preventing violence. Minority populations of Turkmen, Assyrians, Chaldeans, Yazidis, Shabak and others have historically been co-opted and/or expelled by both Kurdish and Arab governments to reinforce their claims to territory in northern Iraq. The return of many of these populations in the immediate post-conflict power vacuum is likely to raise issues that interim local leaders must carefully manage. The question of how they deal with the return of minorities and mixed communities will shape prospects for long-term stabilization.

Raqqa, Syria

Unlike Mosul, Raqqa has changed hands several times from the Syrian regime to myriad opposition groups to ISIS. In interviews, Raqqawis have expressed frustration with Daesh's system of governance and a desire for a civilian local council with a professional security apparatus to impose law and order. The Raqqa City Council that existed in 2013 was supported by some residents for their efforts to work with the population to provide services. Other residents, however, perceived the council as ineffective, weak and disconnected. In order for a future civilian council to play a role in Raqqa's future, it will have to succeed where the previous city council did not.

Raqqa's Tribes and Clans

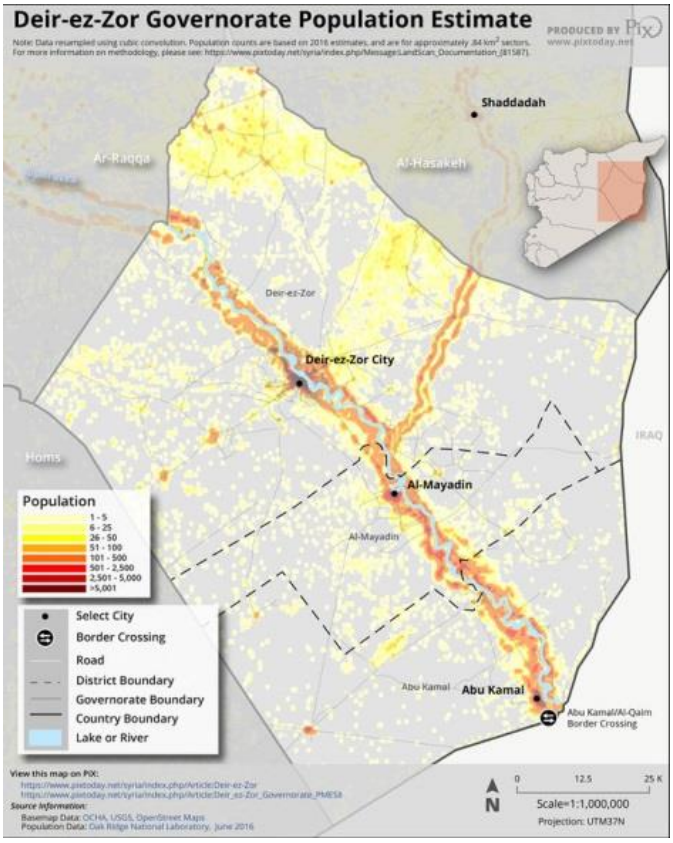
Raqqa's clans can play a key role in the city's reconstruction. Unlike Mosul, which has long been an urban economic hub, Raqqa runs on agriculture and clan relationships. The influence of the tribal stratum has waned recently because of their inability to maintain their coherence and guarantee the security of their members in the midst of conflict, economic instability and social displacement. Clan identity, however, appears to persist as an important social unit and identifier. Several respondents of recent USAID interviews said that they expect clan leaders to create a structure to administer Raqqa after Daesh's clearance. Clan leaders, especially from the influential *al Afadlah* and *al Waldah* clans from the *al Busha'aban* tribe, are likely to be an important source of familiarity and stability in the post-liberation period. Clan elders with deep understanding of the terrain and agriculture can serve as important advisors to a Raqqa civilian council, help protect strategic resources, such as wheat stores, and curb lawlessness. The *al Amira clan* of the *al Anizah* tribe serves as an interlocutor between Daesh and the regime in negotiating caravan passage through territory; their

> "…clans can be spoilers in the rebuilding process. In general, clan leaders cannot guarantee that all clan members or factions will follow their leader as sub-clans and families frequently take different positions."

connections within the local economy and in the regime could serve as a resource to the local council in future arrangements with the regime.

At the same time, clans can be spoilers in the rebuilding process. In general, clan leaders cannot guarantee that all clan members or factions will follow their leader as sub-clans and families frequently take different positions. Moreover, traditionally small, marginalized clans, such as the *al Bariyaj*, *al Sabkah* and *al Buhamid*, which have seen their influence swell under Daesh may be averse to any change in governance. It is important that many clan leaders who remained in Raqqa and pledged allegiance to Daesh not be excluded from power though; for many, it was a practical and economic, rather than ideological decision. Clan leaders who remained in the city but maintained a neutral reputation, such as the *al Afadlah*, are more likely to find their legitimacy intact.

The *al Waldah* clan is known to have played a large part in expelling the regime and administering Raqqa after 2013; however, a number of their leaders have fled to Turkey. Liwa Thuwar ar-Raqqa, the Arab force allied with the Syrian Democratic Forces, is led by the well-known commander Abu Issa from the *Ali* subclan of the *al Waldah* clan. Though the *al Waldah* were a large and influential clan before the conflict, it is possible that their time overseas could raise questions of legitimacy among the population. If a negotiated diplomatic settlement resolves the Syrian conflict, these tribes which opposed the regime may also face challenges in the process of vertical integration.



Increasing the chances of a successful post-conflict transition of governance will require creativity, flexibility and a deep understanding of tribal geographic and economic areas of influence. It will be important to have an inclusive system that can reconcile inter- and intra-tribal differences and, importantly, offers clan leaders the prospect of preserving their members' security and their own influence within the social system.

From Repression to Representation

The governing structure in Raqqa does not have to be entirely rebuilt to be effective. Daesh's system of government can be recalibrated and powered by technocrats to facilitate a transition. The administration encompasses two broad categories: administration and Muslim services. The administrative office covers Islamic outreach, Shari'a institutes, elementary education, law enforcement, courts, recruitment and tribal relations. The provision of services, including humanitarian aid, bakeries, water and electricity falls under Daesh's

Department of Muslim Services. While some offices will need to be disbanded and/or retrained, others can continue to provide essential services.

There is also opportunity to build community buy-in in the process. Daesh tends to put foreign members in high level positions in their administration. In the post-liberation period, it will be important to replace these foreign Daesh members, which include Tunisians, Jordanians, Saudis, and Iraqis, with interim leaders from the local community while preserving the stability and expertise of mid-level technocrats. Moreover, Daesh's governance model is inherently a top-down system which derives power from God and leaders' extremist religious interpretations. After liberation, a clear break in the narrative to one that espouses a bottom-up system will offer institutional resiliency and community buy-in. However, recalibrating the governing structure and finding representative leaders who believe in and can implement this system will be a challenge.

Like Mosul, vertical integration (with central authorities) and horizontal integration (with other power structures on the ground) will shape the fate of these local councils. There is a limit to how effective local leadership can be without the institutional support of a national government and negotiations are ongoing for the future of Syria.

Euphrates River Valley

East of Raqqa, Daesh tries to apply the same governing model to cities along the Middle Euphrates River Valley region. In areas like Dayr Az Zawr City where they are currently still engaged in a military campaign, however, their influence is limited. As in Raqqa, it will be important to identify technocrats in Daesh's administration to maintain essential services and facilitate stabilization in key cities, including Dayr Az Zawr, Al Mayadin and Abu Kamal. Moreover, removing foreign Daesh members from their positions and creating a secure system informed by local leaders will generate buy-in and build momentum in stabilization.

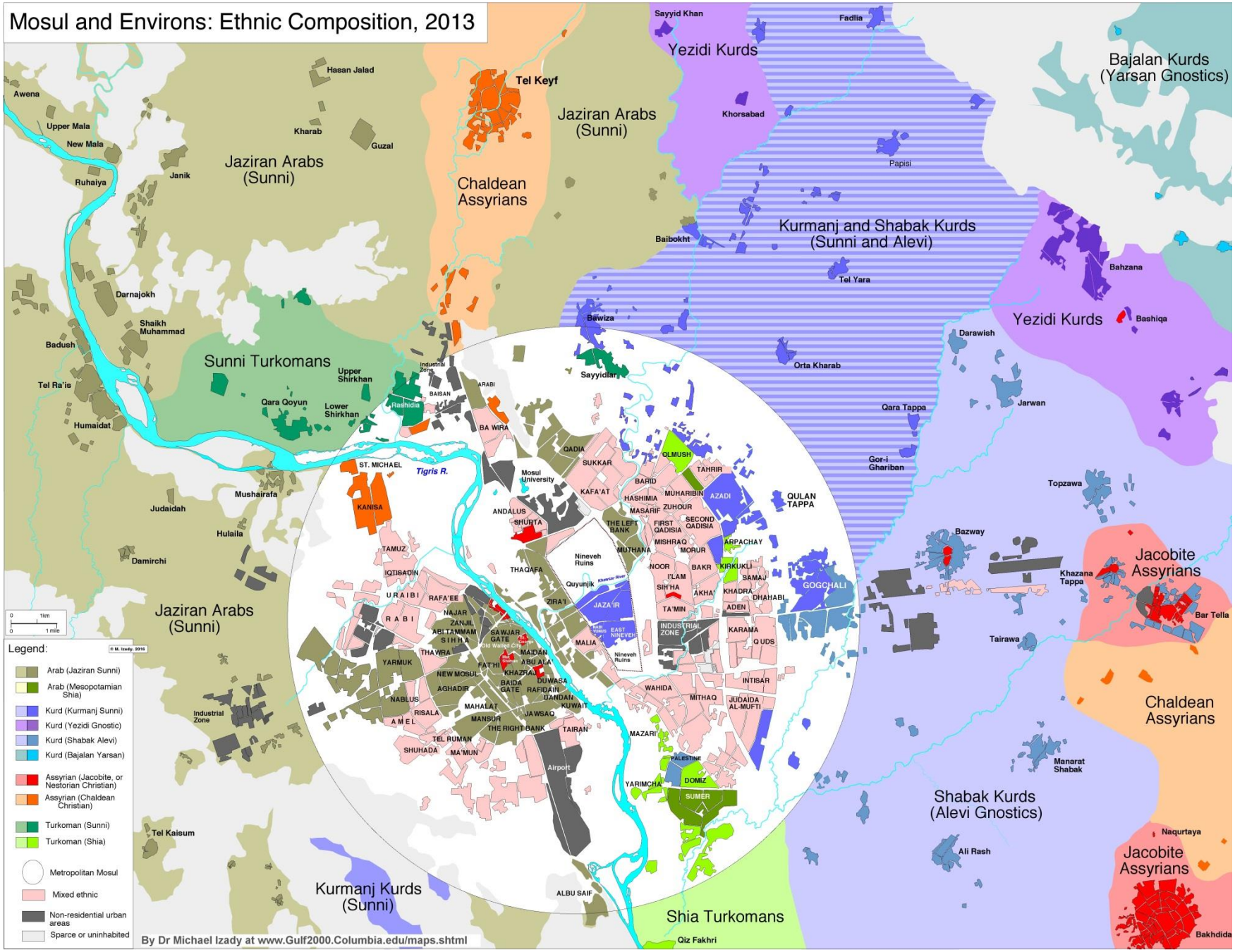
Also like Raqqa, the tribal level is an unreliable unit for understanding allegiances and behavior in Dayr az Zawr governorate. Clan and sub-clan loyalties are more likely to shape local conflict dynamics. Many clans within the same tribe take opposite sides in their stance on Daesh, opposition and the regime. Understanding clan conflicts within and between the major tribes in Dayr Az Zawr, the *Al Baqqara*, the *Al Sha'itat*, and the *Al Oqaidat*, is important to understanding the human terrain.

Despite a shared history of Daesh rule, this region differs from Raqqa in two important ways:

1) The Syrian regime has a presence in Dayr Az Zawr City and control of the airport. In the absence of Daesh, the regime will likely maneuver to fill this vacuum. Their extant relationships and experience with tribal leaders in the city gives them an advantage, unless the coalition can provide an alternative that offers both hope and a better salary. Three tribes predominate Dayr Az Zawr City: the *Baqqara*, *Uqaydat*, and *Shaitat*.

2) Dayr Az Zawr Governorate sits atop vast oil fields, which tribes will vie for commercial influence. Before the civil war, this region provided Syria with 70 percent of its oil revenue. After liberation, it will be especially difficult to gain buy-in from tribes that have been benefactors of Daesh's illicit oil smuggling operations and to place these fields under legitimate provincial or local authority.

Addendum 1: Mosul Ethnic Map



Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Lina Khatib
Chatham House, UK

… To be honest these questions require much further study. I will start by saying that the premise of putting tribes in Syria and Iraq on equal footing is completely off the mark. Tribes in Iraq are political entities that play a role beyond their own regions, but tribes in Syria have never played a political role and it seems that this role is being parachuted on them in the fight against Daesh. In all cases, in Syria and Iraq a decentralized governance structure needs to be debated, but we shouldn't forget that decentralization is still based on the existence of a credible center.

I am not sure what you mean by "future Salafist political institutions"; if you are talking about the evolution of jihadist groups in Idlib and their establishment of political institutions, the situation there is very complex. There is some popular support for some of these groups, but at the same a fair degree of civil society resistance and this is pushing these groups to moderate their behavior in order to appeal to the population. So instead of seeing the future as being dominated by "Salafist political institutions" as fait accompli, it would be more useful to think of ways of working with the grassroots to further push jihadist groups towards moderation, which may well lead to the break-up of such groups as their leaders will inevitably disagree on how far they should pursue a pragmatic political route (this is already happening within Ahrar al-Sham for example).

As for Daesh, the group is likely to remain in Raqqah and the north east for a while because it continues to be a useful tool for Russia and the Assad regime. What other groups might join it depends on how much the Free Syrian Army is supported. The less support given to the FSA by the West, the more likely that individual fighters will seek to join other rebel groups, but Daesh is the least favourable option for these fighters.

Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Amjed Rasheed
Durham University, UK

“A decentralised form of governance seems the best form of governance to be adopted in which allow provinces to rule their cities on their own without an intervention from the centre. This question, however, puts the cart before the horse. As known, ISIL managed to create tribal feud among the clans. For example, al-Sabkha and al-ʻAāfādila tribes drove out al-Shʻīyeyṭāṭ and Chīs from the city. The latter would possibly seek vengeance in the post-ISIL period. Those Shaykhes need to be provided with legal protection and guarantees in post-ISIL’s period.

Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Mubin Shaikh

The governing structure that is most likely to be effective and acceptable to the predominant tribes in the Euphrates River Valley is primarily the default tribal structure and system. While this ancient form of representation yields itself to some form of popular support for governance in general, pressures to manifest and maintain Islamic law as part of its cultural application is to be expected. In no way does this mean it is inherently hostile to Western interests (at the moment), however, attempts to delegitimize the governing authority among the tribes can very easily take on an appeal to religious purity or the perceived lack thereof.

The ideal method of governance in this regard will be the traditional chieftain and tribe as well as councils of chieftains and councils of tribes. Analogies to Afghan counterparts is natural but not necessarily a template to follow.

Human Geography of Syrian Tribes

Gwyneth Sutherlin, PhD
Director of Human Geography and Analytics Research
Geographic Services, Inc.

Focusing on Syria, we leveraged existing Geographic Services, Inc. (GSI) Human Geography (HG) data on tribes, hierarchy relationships/group members, locations, and Prominent Individuals. GSI's complete HG data is available as a cloud hosted graph database from a web service.[7] All data is research-based and has been developed over 10+years of continuous monitoring and update. Research is performed by a team of native linguists, socio-cultural SMEs including a network of in-country experts, and GIS analysts. Each piece of data is multi-sourced and verified.

We unpacked the question of Syrian tribes in (4) parts:

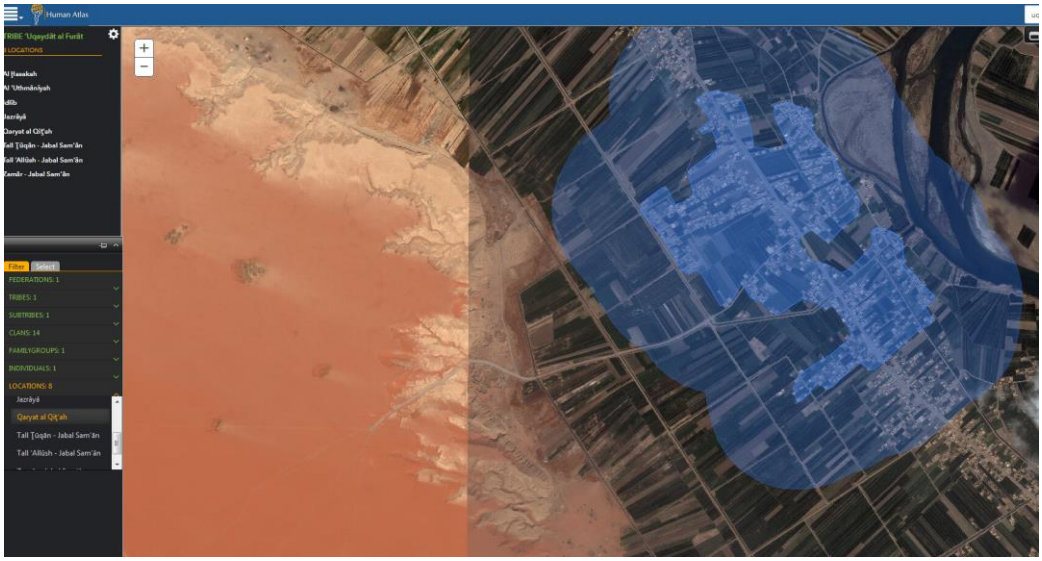
QUESTION	RESPONSE
1. What are the prominent tribes in Syria?	**GSI HG DATA**
2. Who are their leaders?	**GSI HG DATA**
3. Where are the members or groups that make up key tribes tribe located?	**GSI HG DATA**
4. Where are the members or groups that make up key tribes tribe located?	**Opensource Research Refined by GSI HG DATA**

Below is a sample of results. Giving a regional comparison across Syria, we provided data on four tribes ('Uqaydāt al Furāt, Al 'Ujayl, Al Kilbīyah and Al Jbūr) that are considered to have ***Very High*** levels of influence by GSI's *Level of Influence* measure (Very High, High, Medium, Low). We provide screen shots of the web application's interface showing locations (polygons), tribal hierarchies, member groups (in native and Romanized scripts), and associated Prominent

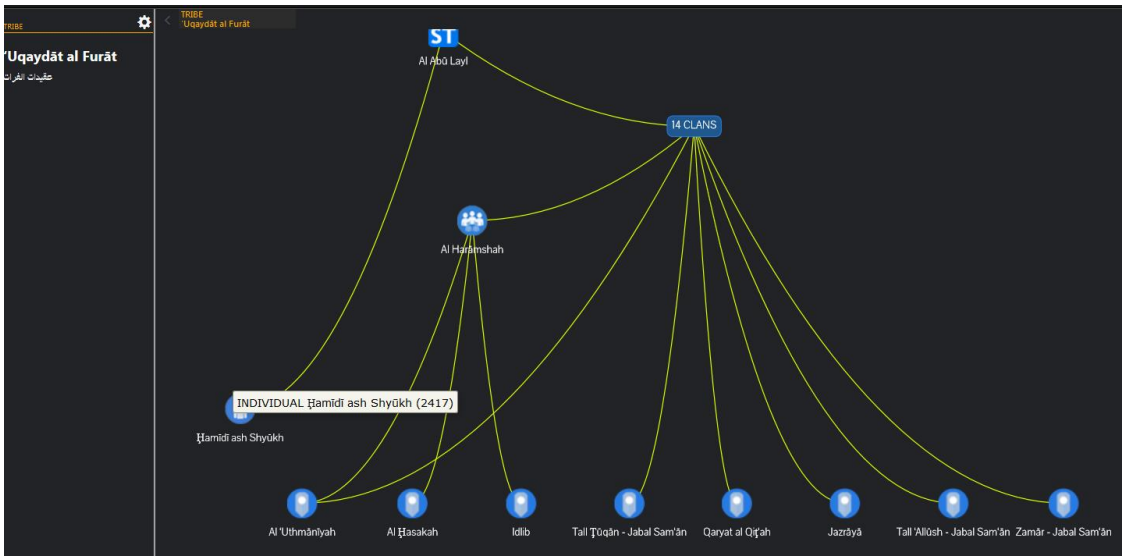
[7] Please contact Dr. Gwyneth Sutherlin at gsutherlin@geographicservices.com for more information on GSI's data holdings.

Individuals. Prominent Individuals have a culturally specific prominence meaning the significance of their role is culturally determined (think movie star in US vs. Saudi Arabia). They carry a Level of Influence measure that can feed into quantitative or dynamic network modeling. For this question, we looked only at the top tier of Prominent Individuals, i.e. tribal sheikhs, who have influence in matters of governance. Additional open source research refined by our HG data provides insight on the question of governance.[8]

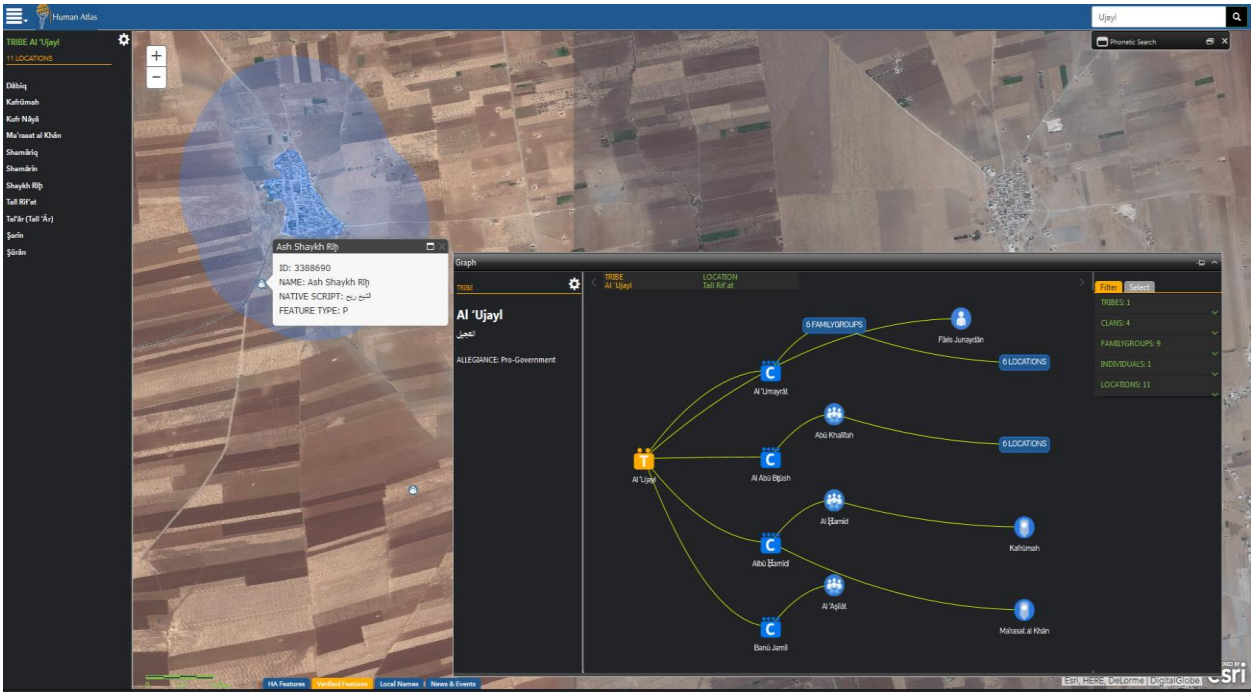
1. **'Uqaydāt al Furāt tribe** is considered ***Very High*** influence level. Tribal leaders have met with ISIL indicating potential allegiance to the group. The locations near the northern and southern Syria/Iraq border as well as in the west near Idlib make the group of interest for continued monitoring. Research Source: Syriahr.com March 3, 2016



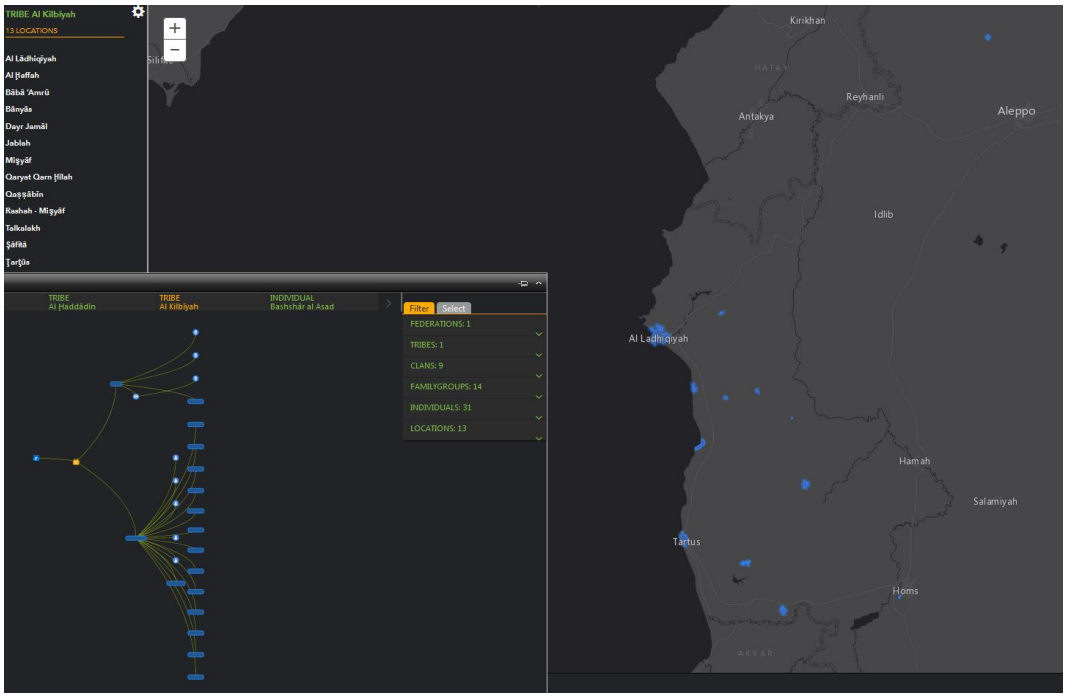
[8] Another approach would have been to integrate CENTCOM mission specific dataset and analyze in relation to verified HG data or select specific location, such as oil fields and explore HG data for control of resource and supply pathways.)



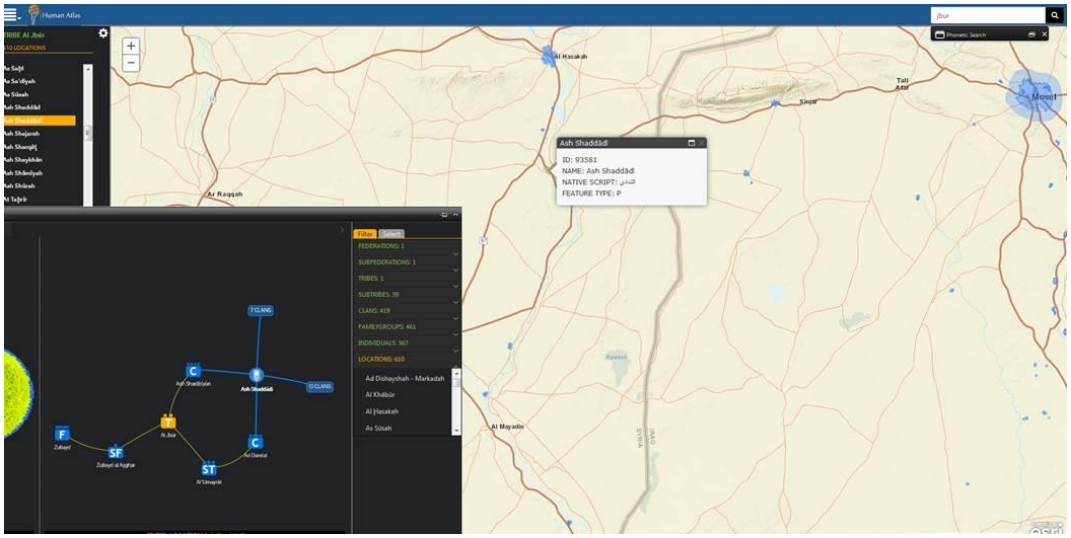
2. **Al 'Ujayl tribe**, with many members spread north and west of Aleppo, is described as 'the largest tribe' in A'zāz district, according to open source research. It is considered to have pro-Syrian Government allegiance. The primary leader is Fāris Junaydān, member of the Peoples Council representing Ḫalab Governorate, and Sheikh of Al 'Ujayl Tribe in Ḫalab. Research source: Smartnews-agency.com May 2016



3. **Al Kilbīyah tribe** is considered ***Very High*** influence level. President Assad is a member of this tribe. The tribe is pro-Syrian government. Also mentioned in the additional research source are the Al Ḥaddādīn and Al Khayyāṭīn tribes, which are both pro-Syrian government and predominately located in the western coastal region. All three tribes share a relationship at the Al ʻAlawīyūn federation level. Leaders of these groups are key decision-makers and many hold high government roles. Research Source: Arabi21.com January 13, 2016



4. **Al Jbūr tribe** is a large tribe that spans Iraq and Syria and has a ***Very High*** influence level. It is a pro-Government tribe whose leadership in Syria, Ash Shaykh Ḥammād al ʻAlī al Asʻad al Fāḍil Āl al Milḥim al Jubūrī from the Ash Shaddādī village of Al Ḥasakah, has expressed a preference for a federalist style of government. Research Source: Hawarnews May 17, 2016



Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Bilal Wahab

It is clear that a central government structure would be unfeasible and impractical. Some form of decentralized governance strutcure, that is inclusive, economically and politically, of minorities—religious and ethnic.

Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Murhaf Jouejati

… it is my view that when Daesh is cleared from Raqqa and other Syrian territory, the people of the area would return to the self-governance system they had put in place following the Syrian uprising in 2011. This is also the case in those areas under the control of moderate rebels. More specifically, local councils would be formed and charged with governance matters. … In general, the Syrian people adopt a moderate form of Islam - the antithesis of Daesh and Nusra dogma. Although many have become radicalized by the brutality of the Assad regime, still, the vast majority rejects Salafism, a movement more characteristic of the Arabian Peninsula than of Syria, a Levantine culture.

Comments on Governing Structures Acceptable to Tribes in Syria

Dr. Joshua Landis
Director, Center for Middle East Studies
University of Oklahoma

The tribes would probably like to rule themselves - but this will not be effective because they have no way of defending themselves against the Assad regime or Iraqi regime. Many may have liked the notion of the large Sunni state established by ISIS that connected the tribes for the first time since the Ottomans were defeated. Most may not have approved of Baghdadi or the chaos and constant war of his regime, but they would have liked not to be ruled by distant and "foreign-Shiite" governments.

1. Iraqi militias have said that they will help the Syrian government return to power in the East of Syria.

2. Assad has said that he will return Syrian sovereignty to East Syria. Already some important tribal leaders who were with the revolution have re-sworn loyalty to Assad and the Syrian State, such as this leader of the Baggara tribe. http://www.syrianews.cc/top-opposition-figure-nawaf-al-bashir-repents-returns-syria/

3. Many tribal leaders in Syria have retreated from overt opposition politics for the past year, because many do not like ISIS and many believe that Assad might come back. They are hedging their bets.

Nusra was a dominant military in much of this area before ISIS took over. There were many other smaller militias in the area as well. Undoubtedly they conformed to local village and tribal structures and factions. It is hard to make many generalizations other than to suggest that the extreme fragmentation that prevailed in this area before ISIS forced conformity on the tribes and villages is likely to return. This is an area of clans and tribes. It has always resisted central government. Syria always ruled with a combination of force, placating tribal leaders, and patronage. ISIS has done the same.

I suspect that the regime will eventually be taken back by the Syria government once ISIS is sufficiently weakened by the coalition and once Assad can retake the West of the country."

Author Biographies

Siree Allers
Siree Allers is a Conflict and Stabilization Action Officer (contractor) for the Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations (CSO) through IEA Corporation. Prior to joining CSO, Siree worked for the U.S. Institute of Peace, International Organization for Migration (Baghdad), and Stratfor.

The Department of State's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations helps embassies and diplomats to visualize, understand, and stabilize conflict. Drawing from multiple disciplines and using conflict prevention tools and field-driven, evidence-based analysis, CSO develops and supports strategies to help the Department and U.S. embassies protect civilians and stabilize communities in conflict.

Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois
Dr. Allison Astorino-Courtois is Executive Vice President at NSI, Inc. She has also served as co-chair of a National Academy of Sciences study on Strategic Deterrence Military Capabilities in the 21st Century, and as a primary author on a study of the Defense and Protection of US Space Assets. Dr. Astorino-Courtois has served as technical lead on a variety of rapid turn-around, Joint Staff-directed Strategic Multi-layer Assessment (SMA) projects in support of US forces and Combatant Commands. These include assessments of key drivers of political, economic and social instability and areas of resilience in South Asia; development of a methodology for conducting provincial assessments for the ISAF Joint Command; production of a "rich contextual understanding" (RCU) to supplement intelligence reporting for the ISAF J2 and Commander; and projects for USSTRATCOM on deterrence assessment methods.

Previously, Dr. Astorino-Courtois was a Senior Analyst at SAIC (2004-2007) where she served as a STRATCOM liaison to U.S. and international academic and business communities. Prior to SAIC, Dr. Astorino-Courtois was a tenured Associate Professor of International Relations at Texas A&M University in College Station, TX (1994-2003) where her research focused on the cognitive aspects of foreign policy decision making. She has received a number of academic grants and awards and has published articles in multiple peer-reviewed journals. She has also taught at

Creighton University and as a visiting instructor at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. Dr. Astorino-Courtois earned her Ph.D. in International Relations and MA in and Research Methods from New York University. Her BA is in political science from Boston College. Finally, Dr. Astorino-Courtois also has the distinction of having been awarded both a US Navy Meritorious Service Award and a US Army Commander's Award.

Dr. Murhaf Jouejati

Dr. Murhaf Jouejati is a Professor at the National Defense University's Near East South Asia (NESA) Center for Strategic Studies. He is also an adjunct Professor of Political Science and International Affairs at the George Washington University and the Former Director of the Middle East Studies Program at the George Washington University's Elliott School of International Affairs. Dr. Jouejati has previously served as a political advisor to the European Commission delegation in Syria. Additionally, he has worked as a consultant to Bureau of Arab States in New York with the UNDP and served as National Program Officer in Syria. He is also the Former Information Officer at the U.S.-Arab Chamber of Commerce.

Dr. Murhaf Jouejati received a B.S. at Lemania College; M.A. at Georgetown University; and Ph.D. at University of Utah. His countries of expertise are Lebanon and Syria. His issues of expertise are: Political Economy, Peace Process, Middle East Affairs, Economics, Development, Democratization, Culture and Society, Commerce and Investment, Arab-Israeli Relations, Regional Security.

Lina Khatib

Lina Khatib is head of the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Programme at Chatham House. Formerly she was the director of the Carnegie Middle East Center in Beirut and the co-founding head of the Program on Arab Reform and Democracy at Stanford University's Center on Democracy, Development, and the Rule of Law. Her research focuses on the international relations of the Middle East, Islamist groups and security, political transitions, and foreign policy, with special attention to the Syrian conflict. She is a research associate at SOAS, was a senior research associate at the Arab Reform Initiative and lectured at Royal Holloway, University of London. She has published seven books and also written widely on public diplomacy, political communication, and political participation in the Middle East. She is a frequent commentator on politics and security in the Middle East and North Africa at events around the world and in the media.

Dr. Joshua Landis

Joshua Landis is Director of the Center for Middle East Studies and Professor at the College of International Studies at the University of Oklahoma. He writes "SyriaComment.com," a daily newsletter on Syrian politics that attracts over 100,000 readers a month. Dr. Landis is a frequent analyst on TV, radio, and in print, He has appeared recently on the PBS News Hour, the Charlie Rose Show, and Front Line. He is a regular on NPR and the BBC. He frequently publishes in leading Foreign Policy journals. He has served as the Syrian Studies Association, won the best teacher prize at his university, and received three Fulbright grants, an SSRC and other prestigious awards to support his research. He has lived for 4 years in Syria and 14 in the Middle

East. He is married and has two boys. He was educated at Swarthmore (BA), Harvard (MA), and Princeton (PhD).

Amjed Rasheed

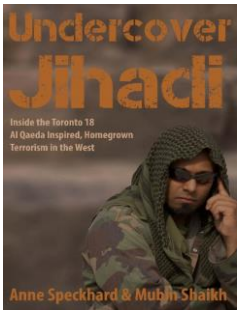
Amjed Rasheed is an academic tutor and a PhD candidate in Middle Eastern Studies at the Institute of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Durham University. The title of his thesis (submitted) is SYRO-IRAQI RELATIONS: THE PUZZLE OF THE PERPETUAL RIVALRY. His research interest focuses on Muslim and Arab World politics, Syria, Iraq and Kurdistan in particular.

Kathleen Reedy, Ph.D.

Kathleen Reedy is an anthropologist and mixed methods researcher at the RAND Corporation. Her background is in Middle Eastern culture and politics. In particular, her research has focused on nationalism, political identities, governance, rule of law, and the gaps between policy and practice in war zones. Prior to joining RAND, she served as a CENTCOM SME for the USAF and as a social scientist for the Army's Human Terrain System, embedding with BCTs in Iraq and Afghanistan. Her graduate fieldwork included 13 months of ethnographic research in Syria, and she has also worked in and on Egypt, the Gulf, China, and Japan.

Since joining RAND in 2014, Dr. Reedy has led or participated in studies on strategic posture and presence; Islamic extremism; right-wing nationalism; the human domain in remote sensing operations; policy options for Syria, Yemen, and Iran; military education and training; and military gender integration.

Dr. Reedy received her Ph.D. from the University of Edinburgh, and her undergraduate degree from Penn State.



Mubin Shaikh

Born and raised in Canada, **Mubin Shaikh** grew up with two conflicting and competing cultures. At the age of 19, he went to India and Pakistan where he had a chance encounter with the Taliban prior to their takeover of Afghanistan in 1995. Mubin became fully radicalized as a supporter of the global Jihadist culture, recruiting others and establishing his network in the extremist milieu. He was affected by the 9/11 attacks which forced to him reconsider his views. He then spent 2 years in Syria, continuing his study of Arabic and Islamic Studies. Rejecting terrorism from Islam, he would go through a period of full deradicalization.

Returning to Canada in 2004, he became an undercover operator with the Canadian Security Intelligence Service and worked several CLASSIFIED infiltration operations on the internet and on the ground. In late 2005, one of those intelligence files moved to the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, Integrated National Security Enforcement Team (INSET) for investigation. The "Toronto 18" terrorism case resulted in the conviction of 11 aspiring violent extremists after Mubin testified over 4 years and 5 legal hearings in the Ontario Superior Court of Justice.

He now has a Master of Policing, Intelligence and Counter Terrorism (MPICT) and is a PhD candidate in Psychological Sciences studying radicalization, deradicalization and violent extremism at the University of Liverpool, Tactical Decision Making Research Group. Mr. Shaikh is considered a SME (Subject Matter Expert) in radicalization, violent extremism and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) to: United Nations Center for Counter Terrorism, Interpol, Europol, Hedayah Center, U.S. Department of State - Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications, National Counterterrorism Center, U.S. DOD Strategic Multilayer Assessment Team, U.S. Central Command - Special Operations Command (as an expert on ISIS), International Special Training Center, NATO (Defence Against Terrorism) and many others. He has appeared on multiple U.S., British and Canadian media outlets as a commentator and is extensively involved with the ISIS Social Media and Foreign Fighter file. He is also co-author of the acclaimed book, *Undercover Jihadi*.

Gwyneth Sutherlin

Dr. Sutherlin is the Director of Human Geography and Analytics Research at Geographic Services, Inc. She provides analytic expertise in socio-cultural dynamics, geospatial technology, cognitive linguistics, and emerging conflict. She is uniquely qualified to provide analysis on complex risk environments drawing from 10+ years of project and field experience. Her publications including 'digital battlefield' and 'lines in the cybersand' have emerged on the cutting edge for multilingual data modelling for security contexts. Always with an eye toward innovation, she applies Human Geography research to improving collection/analysis granularity, security (targeting), cyber security (software development), and geospatial communications intelligence (GEOINT and COMINT). Before completing a Ph.D. with fieldwork in East Africa, her expertise facilitating intercultural dialogue garnered UN recognition, in particular, in the MENA and Sub-Saharan regions of Africa.

Dr. Bilal Wahab

Bilal Wahab is a Soref fellow at The Washington Institute, where he focuses on governance in the Iraqi Kurdish region and in Iraq as a whole. He has taught at the American University of Iraq in Sulaimani, where he established the Center for Development and Natural Resources, a research program on oil and development. He earned his Ph.D. from George Mason University; his M.A. from American University, where he was among the first Iraqis awarded a Fulbright scholarship; and his B.A. from Salahaddin University in Erbil. Along with numerous scholarly articles, he has written extensively in the Arabic and Kurdish media.