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COUNTERING THE HIDDEN HAND: A STUDY OF IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN IRAQ

by

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December 2015

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The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate the pathways of Iranian influence in Iraq in order to provide U.S. decision makers with a possible strategy to counter Iran's malignant influence there. By using a combination of social network analysis and social movement theory, this study illuminates the network of actors fighting Daesh in Iraq by first analyzing the network to map Iran's influence channels and identify macro- and micro-level brokerage within the network. Using a social-movement focused approach, this study then identifies a candidate group for mobilization. Study of the network reveals that Iranian influence is exerted via its sponsored Shi'a militias and by conducting bloc recruitment of tribal militias. To counter this, the Jubouri tribal confederation located in Salahuddin Province offers high potential for mobilization under U.S. sponsorship that could be used to combat Iranian influence.

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COUNTERING THE HIDDEN HAND: A STUDY OF IRANIAN INFLUENCE IN IRAQ

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to illuminate the pathways of Iranian influence in Iraq in order to provide U.S. decision makers with a possible strategy to counter Iran's malignant influence there. By using a combination of social network analysis and social movement theory, this study illuminates the network of actors fighting Daesh in Iraq by first analyzing the network to map Iran's influence channels and identify macro- and micro-level brokerage within the network. Using a social-movement focused approach, this study then identifies a candidate group for mobilization. Study of the network reveals that Iranian influence is exerted via its sponsored Shi'a militias and by conducting bloc recruitment of tribal militias. To counter this, the Jubouri tribal confederation located in Salahuddin Province offers high potential for mobilization under U.S. sponsorship that could be used to combat Iranian influence.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. INTRODUCTION 1
- **A. BACKGROUND 1**
  - **1. Research Question 3**
  - **2. Central Claim 3**
- **B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE 5**
- **C. METHODOLOGY 5**
  - **1. Data Collection Blueprint 5**
  - **2. Thesis Organization 7**

II. LITERATURE REVIEW 9
- **A. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS 9**
- **B. SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY 15**

III. IRANIAN INFLUENCE AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL 23
- **A. REVIEW OF THE MCADAM POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL 23**
- **B. REGIME CRISIS LEADS TO OPPORTUNITY 28**
  - **1. Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s: The Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War 30**
  - **2. Iraq in the 2000s: The U.S.-Iraq War (2003–2011) 34**
  - **3. 2013 to Present Day: Daesh and Iran's Regional Strategy 44**
- **C. CONCLUSION 47**

IV. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF THE IRAQI DEFENSE NETWORK 51
- **A. DATA AND METHODS 51**
- **B. NETWORK OVERVIEW 55**
  - **1. Major Subgroup Affiliations 56**
- **C. NETWORK TOPOGRAPHY 61**
  - **1. Subgroup Analysis 62**
    - ***a. Subgroup Analysis Discussion 66***
- **D. NODE-LEVEL CENTRALITY 66**
    - ***a. Node-Level Centrality Analysis 73***
- **E. BROKERAGE 75**
- **F. SNA CONCLUSION 79**

V. A COUNTER-INFLUENCE STRATEGY 83

A. THE SMT MODEL AS AN APPROACH TO CONDUCTING UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE 83
1. Application of the SMT Strategy 85
B. THE JUBOURI TRIBE 88
1. Political Opportunities and the al-Jubouri Tribe 89
2. The Organizational Strength of the al-Jubouri Tribe 90
3. Jubouri Cognitive Liberation 92
C. CONCLUSION 95
1. Overall Findings 95
2. Limitations 97
3. Recommendations for Further Study 97

APPENDIX. PROJECT CODEBOOK 99
A. RELATIONSHIPS 99
B. ATTRIBUTES 101

LIST OF REFERENCES 103

INITIAL DISTRIBUTION LIST 115

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. IDN, Two-mode Network Visualization.....53

Figure 2. Communications and Colleagues Network by Major Subgroup 54

Figure 3. Shared Organizational and Event Network by Major Subgroup (Tie Strength Greater Than One).....55

Figure 4. Communications and Colleagues Network.....56

Figure 5. Sunni Militia-Shia Militia-Political Actor Dual Membership. Agents With Ties to the Most Subgroups Are Enlarged. 61

Figure 6. Communication and Colleagues Network, K-Core Analysis 64

Figure 7. Communication and Colleagues Network, Node Color = Newman Groups. Nodes in the Same Newman Group as IRGC Gen. Soleimani are Enlarged. 65

Figure 8. Clique Membership.....66

Figure 9. Communications and Colleagues Network, Node Size = Betweenness Centrality.....70

Figure 10. Communication and Colleagues Network, Node Size = Eigenvector Centrality.....70

Figure 11. Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation Network, Node Size = Betweenness Centrality.....71

Figure 12. Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation Network, Node Size = Betweenness Centrality.....71

Figure 13. Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation, Node Size = Eigenvector Centrality 72

Figure 14. Shared Organizational and Event affiliation, Node Size = Eigenvector Centrality 73

Figure 15. Bloc Recruitment of Other Groups by Shi'a Militias 79

Figure 16. Bloc Recruitment of Other Groups by Shi'a Militias 86

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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Network Topography Measures.....62
Table 2. Communication and Colleagues Network Centrality Measures.....68
Table 3. Table Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation Network Centrality Scores.....69
Table 4. Communications and Colleagues Key Player Set.....76
Table 5. Shared Organization and Event Key Player Set 76
Table 6. Gould and Fernandez Brokerage Scores.....77

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AAH	Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq
CENTCOM	Central Command
IDN	Iraqi Defense Network
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMK	Islamic Movement of Kurdistan
IRGC	Iran Revolutionary Guard Corps
IS	Islamic State
ISF	Iraqi Security Forces
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and the Sham
ISOF	Iraqi Special Operations Forces
JAC	Joint Action Committee
JAM	Jaysh al-Mahdi
JIPOE	Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Environment
JRTN	Jaysh Rijal al-Tariqa al-Naqshbandia (Naqshbandia Army)
KDP	Kurdistan Democratic Party
KH	Kata'ib Hezbollah
KIA	Kata'ib Imam Ali
KPP	Key Player Problem
MOD	Ministry of Defense
MOI	Ministry of the Interior
PDB	Promised Day Brigades
PMC	Popular Mobilization Committee
PMP	Popular Mobilization Program
PMU	Popular Mobilization Units
SCIRI	Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq
SMT	Social Movement Theory
SNA	Social Network Analysis
SOCCENT	Special Operations Command, Central
SOF	Special Operations Forces
SWAT	Special Weapons and Tactics

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

While there is a great effort within the United States defense establishment to penetrate the veil of secrecy surrounding the organization that calls itself the Islamic State (referred to hereafter by its Arabic nickname, Daesh[1]), less research has been done to understand one of the United States' key allies in the fight against Daesh, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). This may be for several reasons. First, the U.S. experience in Iraq over the last ten years makes for a good argument that there is no need to explore such a well-known entity further. Second, the effort against Daesh arguably takes up the majority of our planners' efforts, and trying to understand the inner dynamics of ISF is not worth the time.

However, both assumptions are flawed. The ineffectiveness of the ISF, and in particular, the Iraqi Ministry of Defense (MOD), at combatting Daesh has raised concerns in the United States, establishing the need to study the U.S. military's main partner in Iraq. Despite having U.S.-trained and equipped formations that reasonably should have been able to defeat Daesh assaults, the Iraqi Army 2nd Infantry Division, charged with protecting Mosul, abandoned its post and retreated to Baghdad in April 2014.[2] Viewing this as a clear threat to its interests as a regional power, Iran sent a force of 500 military advisers to train and coordinate with Iraqi Security Forces, led by the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps' (IRGC) Quds Force Commander, General Qassem Suleimani.[3] This move by Iran allowed the IRGC essentially to take advantage of a vacuum of leadership and direction within the Iraqi MOD that the United States was supposed to have filled. The U.S. left Iraq in 2011 without a substantial training and partnership effort, essentially forfeiting gains made over the previous eight years. Instead

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[1] Daesh is the Arabic acronym for "Ad-Dawlah al-Islāmīyah fī al-'Irāq wash-Shām."

[2] Suadad Al-salhy and Tim Arango, "Sunni Militants Drive Iraqi Army Out of Mosul," *New York Times*, June 10, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/11/world/middleeast/militants-in-mosul.html.

[3] Associated Press, "Iran's General Qassem Suleimani 'Masterminds' Iraq Ground War," November 5, 2014, http://english.alarabiya.net/en/perspective/profiles/2014/11/05/Iran-s-General-Qassem-Suleimani-masterminds-Iraq-ground-war.html.

of implementing a plan to maintain relationships with Iraqi counterparts, the U.S. military largely cut ties. Exacerbating this is the fact that the Iraqi MOD is not the same organization it was when the U.S. ended its combat mission in 2011. Many personnel selected and trained by the U.S. military were expunged from the organization in 2009 and 2010 when former Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki fired Sunni officers from their posts.[4] Then, on 12 November 2014, Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi relieved 30 senior military leaders thought to be ineffective or corrupt Maliki loyalists following the defeat of Iraqi Security Forces in Mosul in June earlier that year.[5] In a sense, the U.S. is now starting over in its understanding of the make-up of the Iraqi defense establishment. When we have little knowledge about ISF's political orientations and ties, it is reasonable to assume that it would take much more time and effort to re-establish relationships with ISF leaders in order to counter Daesh.

Another factor driving the need to re-examine the Iraqi Security Forces is the ascendance of militias and other forces on the battlefield. Due to the need for more forces, Iraq has partnered with and incorporated several militias into its ranks, such as the Kurdish Peshmerga, the Badr Organization, Ahl Asa'ib al-Haq, and Kata'ib Hezbollah, assisted by the Quds Force. The overt commitment by the United States' regional adversary represents a threat to U.S. interests in Iraq and could possibly upset the balance of power in the region. In March 2014, General Lloyd J. Austin listed countering malignant Iranian influence as one of CENTCOM's top 10 priorities in his posture statement.[6] Without a greater understanding of the internal composition of the Iraqi MOD in the context of this new political situation; however, the U.S. is at risk of working with an unreliable partner in the fight against Daesh, the Iraqis, and ceding the strategic initiative to Iran.

---

[4] Kenneth M. Pollack, "Iraq Military Situation Report" (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, June 14, 2014), http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/up-front/posts/2014/06/14-iraq-military-situation-pollack.

[5] Ahmed Ali, "Iraq's Prime Minister Reshuffles the Security Commanders," *Institute for the Study of War*, November 13, 2014, http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2014/11/iraqs-prime-minister-reshuffles.html.

[6] Lloyd J. Austin III, *Commander's Posture Statement* (Washington, DC: U.S. Congress, 2015), 7, http://docs.house.gov/meetings/AS/AS00/20150303/103076/HHRG-114-AS00-Wstate-AustinUSAL-20150303.pdf.

1. Research Question

The basic question this thesis will seek to answer is this: How can the United States counter Iranian influence within the Iraqi Defense Network (IDN), given Iran's pervasive influence throughout the Iraqi government?[7] To assist in answering this question, this thesis will answer two subsidiary questions:

1. How is the Iraqi Defense Network organized?
2. How can the U.S. leverage the Iraqi Defense Network to disrupt Iran's influence?

This thesis will advance CENTCOM's priority effort through increased awareness and understanding of the Iraqi Security Forces. Its basic premise is that by examining the various organizations fighting Daesh from a network perspective, a truer power structure can be identified, giving strategists a better appreciation of the human domain. Once this power structure and the extent of Iranian influence have been identified, analysis can again be applied to determine suitable methods of displacing this influence through the entrenchment of U.S. influence.

2. Central Claim

This thesis's central claim is that the application of social network analysis (SNA) combined with social movement theory (SMT) will yield an effective strategy to counter the Iranian influence prevalent throughout the Iraqi Defense Network. Combining SNA and SMT will yield a methodological approach that will enable a more complete understanding of influence within the Iraqi MOD. Following Graham Allison's governmental politics model, this thesis's main argument is predicated upon the assumption that the Iraqi MOD represents multiple political coalitions, some of which are not aligned with U.S. strategic interests. Using SNA techniques to analyze the wider Iraqi defense network, this thesis will identify and investigate potential brokers between the MOD and external actors, such as Iranian influencers. Understanding who wields

[7] I define the Iraqi Defense Network as the various Iraqi organizations actively opposing Daesh from expanding across Iraq and overthrowing the Iraqi government. This includes ISF elements such as the Iraqi Army, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, National Police, Kurdish Peshmerga, and non-state actor groups such as Sunni and Shia militia groups.

informal power and influence in the MOD network will allow the U.S. the ability to craft a suitable approach to counter Iranian influence in Iraq.

SNA is analogous to a commander and his staff using Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment (JIPOE) to define the operational environment, and describe its effects on an operation. Similar to JIPOE's goals of facilitating a commander's understanding of how the operational environment constrains and shapes options, SNA will enable leaders and staffs to best understand how the structure of the Iraqi Defense Network can constrain or enable options for implementing a course of action.[8]

Once the network has been mapped, SMT can provide a framework for developing a suitable course of action. SMT can help in the leveraging of organizations, groups, and individuals identified through SNA. Unlike engineered coup d'états, which can be viewed as an expedient solution with no guarantee of permanency, a social movement approach to countering influence provides long-term solutions to political problems.[9] It is better than purely military solutions because of several patterns that have arisen during recent years. State governments, as well as other non-state groups, are increasingly employing non-state actors with more effectiveness, and non-military tactics are becoming more successful in conflicts.[10] One key feature of this phenomenon is the level of embeddedness successful groups acquire within a target society. Those groups who are able to embed themselves within native social movement organizations often achieve lasting results that are imbued with political legitimacy. This makes SMT, with its emphasis on the political approach over the military, a formidable approach to craft strategy.

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[8] Director for Intelligence (J-2), United States Joint Staff, *JP 2–01.3, Joint Intelligence Preparation of the Operational Environment* (Washington, DC: U.S. Joint Staff J-7, Joint Education and Doctrine, 2014), I–2.

[9] Doowan Lee, "A Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," *Special Warfare Magazine* 26, no. 3 (September 2013): 31.

[10] Doowan Lee and Glenn W. Johnson, "Revisiting the Social Movement Approach to Unconventional Warfare," *Small Wars Journal*, December 1, 2014, http://smallwarsjournal.com/jrnl/art/revisiting-the-social-movement-approach-to-unconventional-warfare.

B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this thesis is to trace the pathways of Iranian influence within Iraq, and offer an approach to counter it. It will utilize SNA (sociograms, subgroup analysis, centrality studies, and brokerage metrics) to analyze the Iraqi Defense Network and identify critical nodes within the network that contribute to its function. Next, it will shift its analytical lens to SMT, where a strategy will be developed to leverage the network and mobilize it to shift its priorities and goals to those of the US.

C. METHODOLOGY

This thesis will explore the Iraqi network to identify actors with key brokerage measures using information collected using tools available through the Common Operational Research Environment (CORE) Lab. Its primary sources of information are articles from both U.S. and foreign news websites such as Al Jazeera, Al Monitor, and daily Iranian news roundups collected by the Critical Threats Project of the American Enterprise Institute, formal reports from organizations such as the Institute for the Study of War, and posts and uploaded photos and tweets from social media websites such as Facebook and Twitter.

1. Data Collection Blueprint

Analysis of the network will begin with an examination of SOCCENT's traditional partner in Iraq, the Iraqi Special Operations Forces (ISOF). During the initial investigation using open searches on Google, one prominent actor immediately came to the forefront: Major General Fadhil al-Barwari, the commander of ISOF's 1st Brigade commonly known as the "Golden Division."[11] However, it was clear that using only Barwari as a starting point would lead to unnecessary bias, and other actors were considered to locate the boundaries of the network. Actors featured in news and social media related to Barwari were then investigated, as well as other well-known figures in Iraqi society such as politicians, religious figures, tribal leaders, and other actors, such as leaders of Shia militias. These actors were far enough removed from al-Barwari that their

[11] ISOF's Golden Division or Brigade, or الفرقة الذهبية للواء in Arabic. Its website for visitors is http://www.isof-iq.com/.

distance from him facilitated several start points to begin visualization and analysis of the network. From these seemingly unrelated actors, the network's resulting construction is based on using relational ties contained within a project codebook to structure the data.

From these sources, communication, kinship, trust, mentorship, and organizational ties will be identified, as will various individual attributes. This thesis uses ties defined in a specially designated project codebook.[12] Communication ties consist of relaying of messages between individuals inside the network through some sort of medium, such as a cellular telephone or email. Kinship ties are defined as any family connection through blood or marriage, such as children, parents, siblings, mothers- and fathers-in-law, uncles, aunts, and grandparents. Ties of trust are defined as ties between pairs of individuals who are explicitly identified as friends or are known as trusted associates. Mentorship ties are defined as a relationship where an individual looks to another individual for educational, spiritual and/or technical advice, guidance and/or expertise. Organizational ties are also analyzed, ranging from military, governmental, non-political (defined as employment or allegiance to a specific organization that fits neither the criteria of a political organization nor any other type) and political groups (who seek to obtain political goals generally through non-violent means), to tribal affiliations and religious organizational ties. Individual attributes included in the analysis are current and past occupations, posts held, political motivations, religious affiliation, and current status (either dead or alive).

Due to the variety of information available and the number of actors involved with internal security in Iraq, the network is loosely bounded in nominal terms, meaning that the coding effort is focused primarily on ISOF[13] but has been expanded to include actors from agencies outside the ISOF, such as the Ministry of Interior, Iraqi Army, and prominent social and political figures. The time frame of the data collection is from 2011 in order to maintain the focus on current events and contemporary politics.

[12] The project codebook was designed by Associate Professor Dan Cunningham, CORE Lab, Defense Analysis Department as part of this study's project team and is included in the Appendix.

[13] SOCCENT's primary partners in Iraq.

Two challenges of the data collection have been in locating accurate, useful information and in the veracity of reporting. Because most news reporting focuses on events, there are fewer reports that feature information similar to what would be found in traditional SNA surveys, resulting in a lack of easily accessible relational data. This is magnified by the difficulty in verifying the accuracy and truthfulness of many reports. Because the reports are from foreign news agencies, there are issues both in the quality of the reports as well as accuracy in the translation to English. To mitigate these challenges, this study cross-references as many reports as possible to verify open-source reporting on relational ties and any political context concerning events and actors in the network with data collected in classified reports by SOCCENT.

2. Thesis Organization

The remainder of this thesis includes the following:

Chapter II reviews literature on the theories of SNA and SMT to facilitate understanding of the issue. It serves as a discussion of the theories driving the data collection and analysis, and point out to the reader exactly where the approach utilized in the analysis fits between the fields of SNA and SMT, as well as how an examination of the Iraqi Defense Network will further our understanding of the two fields.

Chapter III is constructed as a case study of the devolution of the Iraqi government following the downfall of the Saddam Hussein regime. It examines the history of Iran's involvement with Iraq to illustrate how the Iranian government successfully mobilized Iraqi opposition forces against Saddam Hussein in the 1980s and the United States in 2003–2011 to attain its policy objectives. This chapter uses SMT as a lens to analyze Iran's actions and provide a model to draw out significant lessons that will inform the strategy recommendations in Chapter V.

Chapter IV introduces the analysis of the Iraqi Defense Network as a social network. It will describe the network in terms of its purpose, direction, and topography, and locates key nodes within the network using SNA measures of centrality and brokerage. It also details the extent of Iranian influence in the network, and determines

critical areas of brokerage where a countering influence could possibly change the overall direction of the network.

Chapter V then summarizes the findings from Chapters II, III, and IV to formulate a possible strategy to leverage the network. It draws on SMT and SNA to identify suitable organizations that can be leveraged to counter the pervasive Iranian influence throughout Iraq. The goal of this chapter is to provide a viable strategy to change the nature of the network so that Iranian influence is lessened, U.S. influence is increased, and the network's own goals are more closely aligned with the goals of the United States.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature for this thesis covers two categories—social movement theory and social network analysis. Where the latter seeks to describe, visualize, and understand a group's composition and relational power structure, the former concentrates on how to leverage a social organization to mobilize in pursuit of a political goal. Both theoretical frameworks address how influence works. This thesis generally argues that social network analysis will help visualize and describe the structure of relations that constitute potential influence in an area or environment, while social movement theory will inform a strategy to take exploit key players' brokerage potential and influence within the network.

A. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS

SNA explores how people relate to one another in daily life, as well as for a specific function or action. Wasserman and Faust describe SNA as a perspective in which the theories, models, and applications are expressed as relational processes.[14] The idea of visualizing and measuring a group's relations began in the early 1930s with Moreno's invention of the sociogram and the founding of the field of sociometry.[15] This idea was adopted by many scientists in other fields, such as anthropology, to explain human behavior of individuals in situations like complex societies or communication between individuals participating in group problem solving. Prell writes that Forsyth and Katz drew from Moreno's work to pioneer the use of matrices in SNA, arguing that matrices could provide a more analytic representation of social network data.[16] She also notes that Harary and Norman were then the first to apply graph theory to SNA to analyze network

[14] Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Applications (Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences)* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 4.

[15] Joseph L. Moreno, *Who Shall Survive: A New Approach to the Problem of Human Interrelations*, Nervous and Mental Disease Monograph Series 58 (Washington, DC: Nervous and Mental Disease Publishing Co., 1934), 10, https://archive.org/stream/whoshallsurviven00jlmo#page/n3/mode/2up; Stanley Wasserman and Katherine Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 11.

[16] Christina Prell, *Social Network Analysis: History, Theory, And Methodology* (Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2012), 23.

data,[17] and others such as Lewin,[18] Bavelas,[19] Festinger,[20] and Cartwright[21] brought the concepts of social structure centrality to SNA.[22] SNA evolved from these early studies, incorporating them all to consider the linkages between people as explanatory of social behavior. Instead of considering behavior solely at the individual level, SNA takes into consideration entire networks, starting at the dyad, or two actors with ties, level.[23] SNA maintains that actors in a network are interdependent, vice independent, and that these ties also serve as conduits for the flow of resources.[24] The applications of this have inherent value; SNA is a powerful tool that facilitates situational awareness of the human domain of an operational environment as well as increased understanding of a friendly or enemy group.

The basic tenets of SNA are examined by authors such as Everton; McCulloh, Armstrong and Johnson; Kadushin; and Borgatti and Everett. Written to analyze and disrupt covert and illicit networks, Everton's work introduces the basic concepts of SNA, how to implement analysis using SNA software programs, how to analyze networks to compute a network or actor's importance, and how to create strategies to affect the network.[25] McCulloh, Armstrong, and Johnson elaborate on the basic concepts of SNA and apply the concept to organizational risk.[26] They define organizational risk as uncertainty in the achievement of an organization's objectives, existing in the form of

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[17] Frank Harary and Robert Z. Norman, *Graph Theory as a Mathematical Model in Social Science* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1953), 1, 15, http://hdl.handle.net/2027/mdp.49015002281716.

[18] Kurt Lewin, "Field Theory and Experiment in Social Psychology: Concepts and Methods," *American Journal of Sociology* 44, no. 6 (May 1939): 869–870.

[19] Alex Bavelas, "A Mathematical Model for Group Structures," *Applied Anthropology* 7, no. 3 (Summer 1948): 18.

[20] Leon Festinger, "The Analysis of Sociograms Using Matrix Algebra," *Human Relations* 2, no. 2 (April 1, 1949): 156, doi:10.1177/001872674900200205.

[21] Dorwin Cartwright and Frank Harary, "Structural Balance: A Generalization of Heider's Theory," *The Psychological Review* 63, no. 5 (September 1956): 283, 292.

[22] Prell, *Social Network Analysis*, 23.

[23] Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 5.

[24] Ibid., 4.

[25] Sean F. Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks*, Structural Analysis in the Social Sciences (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 3.

[26] Ian McCulloh, Helen Armstrong, and Anthony Johnson, *Social Network Analysis with Applications*, 1st ed. (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2013).

vulnerabilities of nodes within the network.[27] Kadushin seeks to analyze the general concepts and theories of SNA and present them in a more accessible form to students who are new to the subject of SNA.[28] Borgatti and Everett focus on giving the reader an introduction to network focused research. Their work, intended to familiarize one with the theory and methodology of network analysis research, explains not only the nature of the analysis itself of SNA, but also how to chart a network and test hypotheses in order to answer research questions. They are similar to Kadushin in their focus on the mechanics of SNA, but differ slightly by concentrating on how to develop and conduct a study of a network.

Fundamental to this thesis' treatment of the Iraqi MOD are the concepts of centrality, cohesive subgroups, and brokers and bridges. Centrality is the most intuitive SNA concept for many, and measures how important actors are in a network.[29] The notion of centrality means that some actors will have better access to other people, resources, and information, which implies that they have more influence within an organization, implying that these actors are more powerful.[30] Moreno was among the first to study the notion that some actors were more important than others in a network. His work on who was a star and who was an isolate in a network laid the groundwork for further study of centrality.[31] Freeman,[32] Bonacich,[33] and Borgatti and Everett[34] refined

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[27] Ibid., 231.

[28] Charles Kadushin, *Understanding Social Networks: Theories, Concepts, and Findings* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2012), 3.

[29] Sean F. Everton, *Dark Networks*, 206.

[30] Ibid., 12.

[31] Joseph.L. Moreno and Jonathan Fox, *Essential Moreno : Writings on Psychodrama, Group Method, and Spontaneity* (New York, NY, USA: Springer, 1987), 178–180, http://site.ebrary.com/lib/nps/docDetail.action?docID=10265575.

[32] Linton C. Freeman, "A Set of Measures of Centrality Based on Betweenness," *Sociometry* 40, no. 1 (1977): 36; Linton C. Freeman, "Centrality in Social Networks Conceptual Clarification," *Social Networks* 1, no. 3 (1979 1978): 221.

[33] Phillip Bonacich, "Factoring and Weighting Approaches to Status Scores and Clique Identification," *Journal of Mathematical Sociology* 2, no. 1 (January 1972): 114.

[34] Stephen P. Borgatti and Martin G. Everett, "A Graph-Theoretic Persoective on Centrality," *Social Networks* 28, no. 4 (October 2006): 467, 476.

Moreno's work to establish what are now standard measures of centrality for SNA analysts.[35]

Everton identifies four major measures of centrality as: degree centrality that measures each actor's number of ties; closeness centrality that considers the path distances between each actor in the network; betweenness centrality, which calculates the extent to which an actor lies on the shortest paths between all other actors; and eigenvector centrality, which measures actor centrality by considering the centrality of each actor's alter network.[36] In other words, an actor with high eigenvector centrality has a personal network consisting of contacts that are also important and well connected.[37] Measuring the centrality scores of each actor determines which actors in the network hold the most social influence over the network, as opposed to who holds the most senior position within a network. Thus, knowing an actor's centrality and influence will facilitate locating key actors.

To measure an actor's influence, or brokerage, this thesis utilizes such calculations as betweenness centrality, Burt's constraint, and Borgatti's key-player algorithm. Granovetter introduces the idea of brokerage, explaining that weak ties are what allow brokers to be brokers. Defining the strength of a tie as the combination of time, emotional intensity, intimacy, and reciprocity, Granovetter distinguishes between weak ties and strong ties as a matter of degree.[38] He explains that a bridge is a tie in a network that is the only path between two subgroups, and that due to their transitive nature strong ties cannot be bridges (except in small groups).[39] Strong ties also encapsulate actors in a subgroup; by sharing and reinforcing ideas with no outside contact, new information and resource inflow to a group becomes limited.[40] Granovetter summarizes by stating that weak ties as bridges are indispensable to maintaining larger

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[35] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 206.

[36] Ibid., 12–13.

[37] Prell, *Social Network Analysis*, 103.

[38] Mark S. Granovetter, "The Strength of Weak Ties," *The American Journal of Sociology* 78, no. 6 (May 1973): 1361.

[39] Ibid., 1364.

[40] Ibid., 1370–1371.

social cohesion and are an important resource in communicating and mobilizing resources.[41]

Ronald Burt, however, takes issue with the notion that only weak ties can act as bridges. Instead of examining the ties between subgroups, Burt concentrates on holes in the structure of a network between clusters. He argues that the causal agent of the information reception phenomena (getting better info from distant contacts as opposed to close) is the structural hole, not the weak tie.[42] Burt contends that tie strength is an aside when considering information flow, and that the focus of a strategic player in a network should be on maintaining tie strength.[43] By developing strong ties across structural holes, an actor will increase his information flow within his ego network. The accumulation of these ties across holes will increase an actor's brokerage. To measure this, Burt introduces the measure of constraint to measure how much an actor is in a position of brokerage by considering the types of triads the actor is involved in, weighting these by that actor's number of ties, and summing the results.[44] Burt's constraint algorithm is helpful for correlating other scores, such as betweenness, eigenvector centrality, and key player scores to identify brokerage.

Borgatti builds on the ideas of centrality and brokerage with his idea of locating individuals who are important to the network.[45] Borgatti's algorithms focus on how actors contribute to the cohesion of a network, and measure both actors whose removal will most fragment the network (KPP-Neg) and actors who are the most connected and embedded within the network (KPP-Pos).[46] An actor with high scores in either measure will have higher centrality scores, and will be also be a cut-point or boundary spanner in one or more bi-component. Borgatti explains that KPP-Pos metrics can be used to

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[41] Ibid., 1373.

[42] Ronald S. Burt, "The Social Structure of Competition," in *Networks and Organizations:Structure, Form, and Action*, ed. Nitin Nohria and Robert G. Eccles (Cambridge, MA: Harvard Business School Press, 1993), 73.

[43] Ibid., 75.

[44] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 255–256.

[45] Stephen P. Borgatti, "Identifying Sets of Key Player in a Social Network," *Computational, Mathematical, and Organizational Theory* 12 (2006): 21, doi:10.1007/s10588-006-7084-x.

[46] Ibid., 22.

identify which actors are best in position to take maximize the utilization of resources, while KPP-Neg metrics identify those who are in positions that will maximize the benefits of brokerage, gatekeeping, and playing one group off of another.[47] This thesis will test the algorithms' ability to locate actors who hold large amounts of influence. I agree with Borgatti's KPP-Neg algorithm's goals of identifying brokerage in the traditional sense as a valid and necessary measure to understand; however, I intend to utilize the KPP-Pos algorithm to find actors who are the most highly embedded to distinguish levels of reach and influence in the MOD network.

Understanding which groups an actor is a member of is critical to understanding his motivations and brokerage potential. Network cohesion measures identify subgroups and can show how different groups are juxtaposed in a network.[48] A group's cohesiveness is generally defined as its resistance to fracture, in terms of the minimum number of connections it would take to break apart the group.[49] Studying network cohesion gives analysts an understanding of a network's characteristics, its resiliency, and prevents haphazard strategy. Sageman discusses these characteristics in his examination of the structural composition of al-Qaeda, to explore how the group could be defeated. He describes al-Qaeda's network topography as a "small world" network resembling the Internet, where, similar to small sites sending and receiving information to larger sites, individual actors and small groups were connected to more important actors and groups that Sageman refers to as "hubs," highlighting these actors' centrality and brokerage potential.[50] This led to his recommendation that the U.S. stop trying to kill an organization's leadership or interdict terrorists at its borders, and instead focus on collapsing an organization by targeting hubs.

Everton and Wasserman and Faust explain the basic measures of sub-group detection, and discuss the differences between them. Wasserman and Faust's basic

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[47] Ibid., 33.

[48] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 170.

[49] Douglas R. White and Frank Harary, "The Cohesiveness of Blocks in Social Networks: Node Connectivity and Conditional Density," *Sociological Methodology* 31, no. 1 (2001): 309.

[50] Marc Sageman, *Understanding Terror Networks* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 140.

properties of cohesive subgroups outlines what makes subgroups cohesive.[51] Group structure varies from simple, as in the case of simple clique of three inter-connected actors, to increasingly complex, where inconsistencies in Girvan-Newman grouping can show actors with brokerage potential. Girvan-Newman grouping measures the connections between actors and systematically removes edges between actors based on the edges' betweenness score to calculate cohesion and identify subgroups. Of the various methods, Everton considers this one as the most advance for detecting subgroups.[52] Everton does not consider cliques in his treatment of SNA because of the unrealistic assumptions that underlie clique membership. In my analysis, however, I find that with a smaller group of actors who have ties to disparate subgroups, the clique membership provided a good visual analysis of the different circles one actor could belong in. Similar to real life, it is helpful to understand who is in which clique.

B. SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

Social Movement Theory literature embraces the ideas of influence and power described in SNA and explores how to leverage these networks in pursuit of political goals. Similar to SNA theory, the idea of influence within social movement organizations is key to leveraging a network's brokerage potential. Max Weber's work on authority is foundational in understanding influence and control. Weber establishes three types of historical authority, or control: rational, traditional, and charismatic. Speaking from an economic point of view, Weber demonstrates how each type of leader in the three systems maintains control of society and interacts with his staff.[53] Somewhat opposite in his ideation of authority and legitimacy to Weber is Schwartz. Leadership, according to Schwartz, was epitomized in General Washington as the harnessing of the virtue of the men under his command towards defeating the enemy, as opposed to Weber's traditional

[51] Wasserman and Faust, *Social Network Analysis*, 251.

[52] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 195.

[53] Max Weber, "III. The Types of Authority and Imperative Co-Ordination," in *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, trans. A.M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1947).

charismatic hero.[54] Nepstad and Bob discuss different types of leadership capital, arguing that leadership capital is formed of resources that an actor can use to exert influence over others, consists of cultural capital, social capital in the form of numerous strong and weak ties within the actor's network and to other networks, and symbolic capital.[55] Social capital can be visualized by using SNA to show the amount and type of ties each actor has within a social network. Nepstad and Bob also talk about the importance of weak ties, referring to Granovetter's concept, to explain the importance of the leader's ability to interact with the media, Internet, and other communications outlets to rally support for the social movement.[56] Similarly, in her article on the causes of growth in Italian left-wing radical organizations, della Porta also notes the importance of social networks in leveraging both strong and weak ties to recruit new members. Through her interviewing of Italian terrorists, she finds that in 70% of her studied cases new recruits had at least one friend in the organization they joined, and that in 42% of these, new recruits had more than seven.[57] Often the new recruits were next-door neighbors, school friends, or close family members.[58] Della Porta's discovery of social network embeddedness as a driver of mobilization confirmed the importance that relationships take when mobilizing illicit or underground networks.[59] Aminzade, Goldstone, and Perry claim in their work that by focusing on a leader's (or team's) actions, one can identify the role of leadership dynamics in social movements.[60] The authors contend that there are two basic leadership dimensions—task oriented and people oriented.[61] These two dimensions embody the

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[54] Barry Schwartz, "George Washington and the Whig Conception of Heroic Leadership," *American Sociological Review* 48, no. 1 (February 1983): 19.

[55] Sharon Erickson Nepstad and Clifford Bob, "When Do Leaders Matter? Hypotheses on Leadership Dynamics in Social Movements," *Mobilization: An International Journal* 11, no. 1 (July 13, 2006): 5.

[56] Ibid., 4.

[57] Donatella della Porta, "Recruitment Processes in Clandestine Political Organizations: Italian Left-Wing Terrorism," *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 158.

[58] Ibid.

[59] Ibid., 159.

[60] Ron Aminzade, Jack A. Goldstone, and Elizabeth J. Perry, "Leadership Dynamics and Dynamics of Contention," in *Silence and Voice in the Study of Contentious Politics*, Cambridge Studies in Contentious Politics (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 128, http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511815331.006.

[61] Ibid., 129.

necessary functions of leaders, from motivation to planning and building the organization that may eventually replace the incumbent government it seeks to replace. The authors argue that both are necessary, and that to have one without the other in a revolutionary movement risks failure.

Whereas many popular treatments and literature about social networks tend to describe them as flat, or decentralized, it is important to appreciate that networks will have both horizontal and vertical, or hierarchical, structure. Critical to a network's horizontal structure is the concept of brokerage. Defined in Han's article as "a process 'by which intermediary actors facilitate transactions between other actors lacking access to or trust in one another,'"[62] brokerage in SMT is highly similar to SNA, where actors exist in social networks who can bridge gaps in communication to transfer information, materials, or other types of support to facilitate action. Brokers also being influencers, they unite separate groups to bring about unified action. Han and Clarke each note the significant ability of brokers to galvanize action amongst disparate groups. These authors show that the resistance groups who were most involved the American Revolution and Egyptian Uprising of 2011 would not have been as successful in mobilizing their forces without inter-connected actors such as Paul Revere, Joseph Warren, and Mohamed Adel, a leader of the Egyptian 6 April Youth Movement. These brokers linked together groups and provided them with a unity of effort that would not have been there otherwise. Han focuses on Revere and Warren's membership in several revolutionary societies in Boston as a key indicator of brokerage potential. Their association in multiple organizations and unique positions in society created ties for Revere and Warren that bridged the structural holes between the many revolutionary societies, which lacked central leadership and direction.[63] Clarke focuses on the placement of actors within the overall societal network to determine brokerage. He discusses the efforts of Egyptian labor and human rights NGO leaders, moderate Muslim Brotherhood leadership (all young MB members), and other political opposition groups to mobilize against the Mubarak regime in the aftermath

[62] Shin-Kap Han, "The Other Ride of Paul Revere: The Brokerage Role in the Making of the American Revolution," *Mobilization: An International Quarterly* 14, no. 2 (2009): 145.

[63] Ibid., 148–149.

of the Tunisian government's overthrow.[64] What each of these actors had in common was his location on the peripheries of Egyptian society. Due to their willingness to work with outside organizations, they were in a better position to hear about the 6 April Youth Movement's plans to protest against the Mubarak regime, and convince the MB senior leadership to support the protests.

Widely spread, decentralized social networks are highly resilient against outside attack and can connect a larger number of people. However, literature on leadership in the form of patronage shows that it is important, if not critical, to identify and understand patronage to discover brokers who perceive events with greater understanding and can provide direction to a movement. Padgett and Ansell's work on the rise of the Medici family of Florence, Italy, in the early 1400s is a logical start point to learn about patronage. They analyze how Cosimo de'Medici, the patron of the Medici family, turned his family's status from elite outcasts to the leading family of Florentine by establishing ties between disparate networks, all of whom were either tied to or dependent on Medici for support.[65]

Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma investigate patronage in the form of clientelism.[66] They argue that, as opposed to popular theory, vertically structured patron-client networks are not an impediment to collective action. In fact, political actors take advantage of other social networks to facilitate politically motivated collective action against other organizations or portions of their governments.[67] Gould, on the other hand, tests the difference between having authority and having resources for actors in brokerage positions. He hypothesizes that brokers' structural position between oppositional factions enhances their influence.[68] However, these brokers are not able to mix the influence

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[64] Killian Clarke, "Unexpected Brokers of Mobilization, Contingency and Networks in the 2011 Egyptian Uprising," *Comparative Politics* 46, no. 4 (July 2014): 386–387.

[65] John F. Padgett and Christopher K. Ansell, "Robust Action and the Rise of Medici, 1400–1434," *American Journal of Sociology* 98, no. 6 (May 1993): 1262.

[66] Javier Auyero, Pablo Lapegna, and Fernanda Page Poma, "Politics and Contentious Collective Action: A Recursive Relationship," *Latin American Politics and Society* 51, no. 3 (Fall 2009): 1.

[67] Ibid., 22.

[68] Roger V. Gould, "Power and Social Structure in Community Elites," *Social Forces* 68, no. 2 (December 1989): 536.

gained from impartiality with the influence from their ability to mobilize resources. Osa considers patronage under conditions of repression in her analysis of the development of opposition networks in communist Poland. Using the opposition movement in Poland from 1956 to 1981 as a case study, she shows how opposition groups exploit political opportunities to organize, mobilize, and conduct collective action in pursuit of political objectives. While she does not explicitly discuss the brokerage between opposition networks of the Catholic community and other organizations, brokerage is implicit in her description of how the Catholic oppositional groups served to carry on the message of opposition despite numerous attacks against the network by Polish communist authorities.[69]

Each of the authors studied generally agree on the concept of brokerage and its definition. Padgett and Ansel discuss Medici's campaign of "robust action" to describe the Medici family's style of using influence to further its goals.[70] Gould borrows Marsden's definition of brokerage to frame interaction between structurally influent actors and their network.[71] Auyero et al. treat brokerage as a political transaction, where the broker, in return for a pledge of political support, provides financial or other materiel support to actors or organizations.[72] While Osa does not describe any one opposition organization as a broker specifically, she points out that one of the essential requirements for political opportunity is availability and access to influential allies.[73] Each article reviewed describes a different aspect of brokerage, which when considered as a group, provides a broader understanding of what a broker provides and how he influences a network.

While the above-mentioned readings generally agree on the concept of brokerage, there is disagreement over the pursuit of personal or organizational interests while in a

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[69] Maryjane Osa, "Troublemakers and Counter-Revolutionaries: Network Development and Protest Cycles in Authoritarian Regimes" (Social Movement Analysis: The Network Perspective, Ross Priory, Loch Lomond, Scotland, 2000), 29.

[70] Padgett and Ansell, "Robust Action," 1263—1264.

[71] Gould, "Power and Social Structure," 533.

[72] Auyero, Lapegna, and Poma, "Patronage Politics," 3.

[73] Osa, "Troublemakers," 15.

structurally influential role (or other broker role). In his analysis, Gould demonstrates that power stemming from the ability to mobilize resources negatively correlates with power derived from brokerage capacity. He concludes that the use of resources as a mobilization tool erodes the aura of impartiality necessary to maintain credibility as an influential broker and mediator.[74] In this matter, I disagree with Gould's assessment, and find that this conflicts with the idea of "robust action" defined by Padgett and Ansell. Padgett and Ansell use the idea of multivocality—interpreting actions from multiple perspectives simultaneously—to argue that Medici overcame the dichotomy between impartiality and self-interest.[75] By concealing and obfuscating his intentions and committing to several different efforts (requests from friends), Medici was able to grow in power. In contrast, Gould uses a narrow definition brokerage— mediating between enemy factions— to demonstrate that self-interest is counter to brokerage. While there are situations where impartiality is beneficial in arbitration, I believe it is preferable to incorporate self-interest into calculations of brokerage capacity to determine an actor's influence.

In assessing existing literature on SNA and SMT, it is apparent that the two fields are interrelated. The SNA literature is fairly unanimous in its acceptance of certain measurements, such as actor centralities. The distinctions between the studied authors were not so much disputes about theory as they were variations in the methods with which to approach SNA. Each difference studied could be used in conjunction with other approaches without issue. SMT literature, on the other hand, placed emphasis on different aspects of social movements. Some authors focused more on leadership aspects, while others described how brokerage and influence permeated and were used by the movement organizations to accomplish their goals. Both schools of thought, however, recognized the importance of brokerage at the individual, group, and network level. This recognition is also where I identified a gap in the understanding of influence between the two areas. SNA helps to understand what networks are and how they are composed, and visualizes influence in terms of an actor's structural position and control of critical resources within a network. SMT, on the other hand, informs understanding into which factors influence

[74] Gould, "Power and Social Structure," 546.

[75] Padgett and Ansell, "Robust Action," 1263–1264.

and enable networks to mobilize to accomplish political objectives. In this sense, the literature on the two subjects shows that they are complementary in understanding the nature of influence.

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III. IRANIAN INFLUENCE AND THE POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

Iran's position in Iraq today is a result of its long sponsorship of Shia oppositional groups. Beginning with the war between Iran and Iraq at the beginning of the 1980s, Iran has leveraged such groups as the Islamic Da'wa Party, or al-Da'wa, and the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq as a means to achieve its policy goals. Today, the upheaval caused by the rise of Daesh has created a new opportunity for Iran to expand its power in Iraq. However, to better understand how this turn of events is necessary to understand how and why Iran is able to exert its power throughout Iraq. Here the political process model offers the means to provide such an understanding. To analyze Iran's increasing influence in Iraq, it must be viewed from its main mechanism. In this case, the sponsored Shi'a political parties such as the Da'wa Party and the SCIRI embody Iranian influence through these groups' shared history of social insurgency to change the Iraqi political landscape. McAdam's political process model offers a useful framework to appreciate the method behind Iran's strategy and shed light on its influence within the Iraqi government.[76] Furthermore, it can assist the U.S. with developing better courses of action to disrupt Iranian influence throughout Iraq and the greater Middle East. By analyzing two key periods of upheaval, the Iran-Iraq War and the U.S.-Iraq War of 2003–2011, a pattern can be discerned that shows how Iran manipulated the political opportunities structure for certain Iraqi oppositional groups and then leveraged their organizational strength, gaining Iran access and placement within Iraqi political circles necessary to implement its long-term strategy of political dominance in Iraq.

A. REVIEW OF THE MCADAM POLITICAL PROCESS MODEL

McAdam's political process model frames the rise of Iranian influence in contemporary Iraq as a successful mobilization of organic social movements. It explains the generation of social insurgency as the convergence of three major factors: political opportunities structure, indigenous organizational strength, and cognitive liberation are

[76] Doug McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," in *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930–1970* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 40.

all reflected in the changing socio-economic environment and are each necessary for insurgency to take place.[77] Considering psychological strain and other environmental conditions to be important but insufficient by themselves to lead to insurgency, this approach differs from the classical model of social revolution.[78] He rejects the idea that social movements are illogical reactions to societal strain, and instead argues that social movements are a way for those who do not have power to contest the ruling elite for control.[79] A second model compared to the political process model is the resource mobilization model. McAdams agrees with this model in that he considers a social movement to be a rational reaction by groups lacking political power to advance their political interests, but rejects the idea that only political elites have access to the resources necessary for mobilization.[80] Instead, the political process model regards the differences in power between groups as temporary and open to influence. Non-ruling groups have the inherent ability to challenge the *status quo* by provoking social change through transforming their collective consciousness and taking advantage of favorable environmental conditions to elevate their standing vis-à-vis the political elites and engage in collective action.[81]

The political process model first considers the opportunities available to undertake collective action by analyzing the broad external processes that shape a political system.[82] Socioeconomic changes over time such as industrialization, urbanization, and increased education and social mobility opportunities can alter the basic societal structure of a culture, changing the potential leveraging capacity of groups without rearranging the corresponding power structures. In contrast, instability created by wars, large-scale strikes or other episodes of unrest disrupt the balance of power between

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[77] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 51.

[78] Doug McAdam, "Chapter 1: The Classical Model of Social Movements," in *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency: 1930–1970* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 7; Doug McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 36.

[79] McAdam, "Chapter 1: The Classical Model of Social Movements," 18.

[80] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 37.

[81] Ibid., 37–39.

[82] Ibid., 59.

members and challengers and create immediate opportunities for any group sufficiently organized to seize power for themselves; the Egyptian Muslim Brotherhood's successful rise to power following the ousting of Mubarak in 2011 is suggestive of such a situation.[83] A social movement's organizational strength is contingent upon these changes as well as its ability to translate opportunities into political action. This ability, in turn, depends on the level of organization present in the larger social community in which movements are based. Without extensive organization, aggrieved populations are often limited to short-term localized efforts and are unable to go beyond protests and riots.[84] As the Arab Spring in Egypt demonstrated, the results of an increased structure of political opportunities are twofold: a social movement's organization's chances of successful insurgency are improved, and the ability of the ruling elite to repress a burgeoning movement is reduced.[85]

In addition to increased opportunity, the mobilization of resources grants a minority the capacity to conduct a successful insurgency. Without resources, a challenger will likely be unable to act on political opportunities despite having the will to do so.[86] The ability of a social movement to apply its resources, which McAdam terms the "conversion potential," relies on the movement's capacity to gather and use four main resource components: *members*, *communications structure*, *solidary incentives*, and *leadership*.[87] The power to recruit new members is the greatest resource social organizations have to offer. McAdam writes that no matter how disaffected a potential recruit is, he must necessarily come into contact with some representative from a prospective movement organization if he wishes to act on his disaffection in an organized manner.[88] The recruitment of individuals then, typically runs through already established lines of communication built on existing relationships. Similarly important is the communications network structure that embedded social organizations provide, which

[83] Ibid., 42.

[84] Ibid., 44.

[85] Ibid., 43.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Ibid., 44.

[88] Ibid.

facilitates both the ability for a new movement to take hold and its ability to mobilize resources. McAdam points to the theory of cultural diffusion, stating that the degree of social interrelatedness of actors within a community affects the ability of movement organizers to gain social acceptance and support from their targeted community. The more these organizers are embedded within their communities, the more likely it is that they will influence their communities to embrace social revolution.[89] The utilization of solidary incentives helps social movement organizers solve the "free-rider" problem, which occurs when both participants and non-participants can benefit from a social movement's efforts regardless of whether they participate, thus leading some to "free-ride" on the efforts of others.[90] A social movement can overcome this problem by co-opting already established social organizations, whose members are already committed to their organizations' respective causes and which possess a motivating force sufficient to encourage their members to engage in collective action. Leadership is the resource that ties the other main resource components together and can help guide the expansion of a social movement. Leaders are often the first to be recruited for a larger movement, and by virtue of their embeddedness can spur the adoption of a movement's goals, organize its recruiting efforts, and direct communications to galvanize support of the new movement.[91] Viewed from this perspective, it becomes absolutely critical to gain the support of local leadership when seeking to leverage indigenous organizations to support a social movement.

Cognitive liberation, which is not considered by either the classic or resource mobilization models, is the third factor of McAdam's model. It details the process by which individuals react to the changes occurring in their political environment and decide to engage in political action.[92] This is the critical link between potential and action, and

[89] Ibid., 46–47.

[90] Ibid., 45.

[91] Ibid., 47.

[92] While this thesis discusses socio-economic processes, the structure of political opportunities, and organizational strengths in its analysis of Iran, a discussion of cognitive framing is beyond the scope of this thesis and is not discussed.

depends on the meaning people give to their situation.[93] The attribution of significance is a crucial factor in the generation of insurgency, and without this it is unlikely that an insurgency movement will be able to gain or support.[94] In his description of cognitive cueing, McAdam uses the three-part cognitive process developed by Piven and Cloward where people first perceive that their governing system has lost legitimacy, then begin to believe that they have a right to change, and then finally come to think that they possess the capability to effect this change themselves.[95] The observations themselves are not based on factual evidence so much as cues taken from others within each person's larger social group. The extent of the diffusion and acceptance of such cues depends on the strength of the ties within the social group, or its level of social integration.[96] Without a highly integrated community, cognitive liberation would be unlikely to take place. Instead, less integrative communities would tend to explain their problems as a "function of individual rather than situational factors," blaming problems on individual issues rather than "system attributions."[97] People in these types of communities would likely not see their problems as fixable, even if they recognized that the cause was outside their control. Highly interactive communities, on the other hand, would likely have more system attributions. This is significant to social movements because only system attributions are found to provide the necessary motivation to engage in sustained collective action.[98] This makes the existence of embedded social organizations even more important to the political process model because cognitive liberation is expected to occur primarily though these networks.[99]

As an alternative theory of social insurgency, the political process model is useful in analyzing social movements and collective action because it balances external and

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[93] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 48.

[94] Doug McAdam, "Micromobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism," *International Social Movement Research* 1 (1988): 132–133.

[95] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 49–50.

[96] Ibid., 50.

[97] Ibid.

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid., 51.

internal factors to explain how social insurgency emerges. Political opportunities arise from both broad, long-term changes in the macro environment as well as acute periods of instability that undermine the status quo and provide challenger groups with the power to rearrange the political structure. To do this, these groups must convert their main resources from unfocused, potential power to directed action against the established political elite. Importantly, if a movement can leverage indigenous organizational strengths to seize these opportunities, it has a much greater chance of engaging in collective action against the government.

B. REGIME CRISIS LEADS TO OPPORTUNITY

Iran's involvement in the current crisis in Iraq is the latest turn in a 30-year effort by Iran to ensure regime survival and maintain a competitive edge in the regional balance of power.[100] Iran's strategy, when viewed through the lens of the political process model, yields several noteworthy insights as to how it took advantage of increased political opportunities by utilizing Shia oppositional movements. Part of Iran's long-term regional strategy appears to be ensuring that political movements loyal to Iran are placed in control of Iraq following the resolution of conflict.[101] It began as part of Iran's strategy to undermine Iraq during the Iran-Iraq War of the 1980s, and has continued through the U.S.-Iraq War of 2003, the subsequent U.S. occupation and installation of the current Iraqi government, and the current crisis Iraq faces today. Iran initiated its strategy to influence Iraqi politics by sponsoring opposition parties in the 1980s and 1990s to fight against Saddam Hussein, and leveraged these groups to direct politics within the new Iraqi government and direct proxy forces against U.S. forces.[102] The Shia community in Iraq has provided a highly organized indigenous structure that Iran has successfully

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[100] Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq: Politics and 'Other Means,'" Occasional Paper Series (U.S. Military Academy, West Point NY: Combating Terrorism Center at West Point, October 13, 2008), 12–14, https://www.ctc.usma.edu/posts/iranian-strategy-in-iraq-politics-and-%E2%80%9Cother-means%E2%80%9D.

[101] Ibid., 26. While the time period of Felter and Fishman's report covers the U.S.-Iraq War of 2003, Iranian strategic goals have not changed with the rise of Daesh.

[102] J. Matthew McInnis, "Iran's Strategic Thinking: Origins and Evolution" (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute, May 2015), 15–17, https://www.aei.org/publication/irans-strategic-thinking-origins-and-evolution/.

utilized for its own ends. As a pool of resources, the Iraqi Shia have provided two of the most critical components: a robust supply of members, most of who were committed to the removal of Saddam Hussein, and a community which has maintained a healthy communications network both inside Iraq and outside throughout the greater Middle East.[103] The two initial movement organizations, the Da'wa Party and the Supreme Islamic Council for Iraq, have had in place for many years an active leadership aligned with Iran's goal of Islamic government and who are now receptive to Iranian aid to combat Daesh.[104]

The formation of Shia oppositional groups was initially aided by widespread socio-economic changes within Iraqi society. These altered the power structures within Iraq, which increased the Shia community's awareness of political opportunities although the status quo between elite Sunni leaders and challenger Shia groups remained unchanged. These socio-economic changes have their roots in events that arose over sixty years ago. Before the Iran-Iraq War, Iraq underwent a long period of political instability coupled with macroeconomic changes culminating in the Ba'ath Party's rise to power. Post-World War II urbanization also had a major impact on Iraqi society, changing a primarily pastoral, tribal-based society focused on subsistence farming to an agricultural, tenant-based one with a new focus on commerce in oil and manufacturing.[105] This resulted in a significant concentration of the populace in urban areas, condensing people's social circles and bringing people into closer contact with others outside their sphere. Following the Ba'athist coup of 1958, nationalization of the country's industry caused a major slowdown of manufacturing growth as well as a flight of capital, essentially bankrupting the country.[106] The Ba'athists reacted to this by creating several state-run entities for its major sub-sectors. Due to its socialist policies, however, it was

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[103] Rodger Shanahan, "The Islamic Da'wa Party: Past Development and Future Prospects," *Www.rubincenter.org*, 2004, http://www.rubincenter.org/2004/06/shanahan-2004-06-02/.

[104] Felter and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 19–20.

[105] Helen Chapin Metz, "Iraq: A Country Study," *Countrystudies.us*, 1988, 39, http://countrystudies.us/iraq/.

[106] Ibid., 56.

nearly impossible to lay people off and the system became bloated with workers, creating tension within the country and dissatisfaction by the Iraqi populace.[107]

In the late 1970s, the rapid increase in oil revenues brought on by the nationalization of the Iraqi Petrol Company's oil fields as well as more liberal economic policies, created new opportunities for Shia Iraqis— normally lower class— to increase their wealth.[108] Additionally, Saddam Hussein enacted broad educational programs that offered mostly free university education to all citizens, which raised literacy rates throughout the country.[109] These trends and policies allowed the Shia to move up the social and economic ladders, marking the beginning of what McAdam calls a "thaw" in the political system, which in turn altered the Shia community's structure of political opportunities.[110]

1. Iraq in the 1970s and 1980s: The Iranian Revolution and the Iran-Iraq War

Iran's current influence strategy and mobilization of internal groups in Iraq can be traced to its effort to dispose of the Saddam Hussein regime during the 1980s. The war between Iraq and Iran created an intense political crisis that Iran seized upon as its first opportunity to increase its regional influence. Prior to beginning of the Iran-Iraq War, Iran sought to gain an advantage over Iraq by sponsoring oppositional groups including the Da'wa Party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the Kurdish Democratic Party, Islamic Movement of Kurdistan (IMK), and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan.[111]

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[107] Ibid.

[108] Ibid., 24.

[109] Hala Mundhir Fattah and Frank Caso, *A Brief History of Iraq* (New York, NY: Infobase Publishing, 2009), 213, https://books.google.com/books?id=Q_-hrXU-mWYC.

[110] McAdam, "Micromobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism," 128.

[111] Nader Entessar, "The Kurdish Factor in Iran-Iraq Relations," *Middle East Institute*, January 29, 2009, http://www.mei.edu/content/kurdish-factor-iran-iraq-relations; David Romano, "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq," Occasional Paper (The Jamestown Foundation, 2007), 8, http://www.jamestown.org/uploads/media/Jamestown-RomanoIraqiKurds_01.pdf.

Beginning in the late 1970s heightened political tension between Iran and Iraq helped destabilize the political status quo in Iraq, allowing Iraqi opposition groups to further mobilize. The first signs of instability appeared in 1977, when the Ba'ath Party closed the Shia pilgrimage sites in Karbala after suspecting a terrorist attack during the height of religious ceremonies there.[112] This act sparked violent protests by Shia Iraqis, which were only quelled after the Army was brought in.[113] Following these riots, the Ba'ath Party responded by executing several key Shia clergy members, to include the arrest and later execution of Ayatollah Baqr al-Sadr, one of Iraq's leading clerics.[114] Iraq's decision to expel thousands of Iranian Shia living in Iraq in 1974 by repressing the Shia community and Iraq's later deportation of Khomeini further exacerbated the worsening political status quo by creating the conditions that contributed to Iraq's decision to initiate war against Iran.[115] After its establishment, the new theocratic regime in Iran immediately denounced Saddam Hussein by openly calling for Islamic revolution in Iraq and sponsoring Shia opposition groups' efforts against him.[116] In addition to open agitation, Iran began to sponsor Kurdish and Shia opposition groups to begin attacking Ba'ath Party officials.[117] The Ba'ath government responded to this by banning opposition groups, arresting anyone suspected of being a member or having a connection to the group, and deporting several thousand ethnic Iranians from Iraq to Iran.[118] These actions by the Ba'athist government effectively repressed the Shia community and limited its level of "insurgent consciousness."[119] These measures were largely circumvented, however, with the onset of war. The war between Iran and Iraq became a crisis that

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[112] Metz, "Iraq Country Study," 24.

[113] T. M. Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr in Shii Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 25, no. 02 (1993): 214.

[114] David A. Korn, *Human Rights in Iraq*, Human Rights Watch Books (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 68, https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/Iraq90N.pdf.

[115] Helen Chapin Metz, "Iraq Country Study," 114; Greg Cashman and Leonard C. Robinson, *An Introduction to the Causes of War: Patterns of Interstate Conflict from World War I to Iraq* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2007), 288–289, https://books.google.com/books?id=EdpbAAAAQBAJ.

[116] Korn, *Human Rights in Iraq*, 7.

[117] Metz, "Iraq Country Study," 24.

[118] David A. Korn, *Human Rights in Iraq*, 52.

[119] Doug McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 40.

erased the political status quo to the point that Iranian sponsored opposition groups could mobilize without fear of political repression. Throughout the war, groups used by Iran to target Iraqi officials became irregular units who on the front lines of the war with Iranian forces against the Ba'athists.[120] Two of the larger organizations, the Da'wa Party and the Badr Brigades, continued their efforts against Ba'athist Iraq after the war officially ended: the Badr Brigades became formally constituted under the IRGC, while the Da'wa Party organized efforts throughout the Middle East to establish Islamist regimes.[121] The long period of political instability and continued sponsorship transformed Iraq's opposition groups from political activists to fully fledge proxy forces combatting Iraq.

The Ba'athist repression of the Shia Iraqis and Kurds provided the impetus for opposition parties and other organizations to seek out Iran's help, and gave Iran the opportunity to leverage two already mobilized social groups to conduct attacks against Iraq at the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War. Common religious background and heritage made the selection of the Da'wa Party an easy choice for Iran to begin its destabilization of Iraq. Started in 1958 by influential Iraqi Shia clergy such as Ayatollah Sayyid Muhammad Baqir as-Sadr, the Da'wa Party strongly desired an Islamic government in Iraq.[122] As-Sadr and his followers were deeply embedded within the Shia community, which lent their efforts additional credibility and allowed them to reach numerous smaller communities and influence potential recruits. Its members were historically and ideologically allied with the Iranian Shia leadership; when the Iranian government was overthrown in the Islamic revolution, the Da'wa Party made Islamist governance one of its own goals as well. The Da'wa Party's leadership was receptive to Iranian influence,

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[120] Mahan Abedin, "Dossier: The Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (October 2003)," *Middle East Intelligence Bulletin*, October 2003, https://web.archive.org/web/20031205063146/http://www.meib.org/articles/0310_iraqd.htm.

[121] Joseph Felter and Brian Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 21–22; Dan Murphy, "New Iraqi Leader Seeks Unity," News, *Lebanon Wire*, (November 25, 2011), https://web.archive.org/web/20111125111553/http://www.lebanonwire.com/0604MLN/06042403CSM.asp; "Leader Description: PM Nouri Al-Maliki," *Islamic Dawa Party*, December 24, 2007, https://web.archive.org/web/20071224084117/http://www.islamicdawaparty.com/?module=home&fname=leaderdesc.php&id=78; Near East Policy Research, "A Brief on the 9th Badr Corps (Brigade), September 2001," *Near East Policy Research*, September 14, 2001, 1, http://neareastpolicy.com/wp-content/uploads/2011/11/BRIEF-BADR.pdf.

[122] Chapin Metz, "Iraq Country Study," 49.

readily adopting Iranian goals as their own and communicating the ideas and narrative frame throughout the network. As the founding leader of the Da'wa movement, Sadr was the ideal candidate to steer the Da'wa Party and the larger Shia community. A leading religious scholar, Sadr pioneered many of the original ideas of Islamist government that Iran used to create a theocracy after assuming power such as Islamic economic theory and the structure of Islamist government, and led the development of the Islamist group's structure and doctrine.[123] As a retaliatory measure for his opposition to the Ba'ath Party, Hussein executed him.[124] During the war, Nouri al-Maliki also rose to a position of leadership within the ranks of Da'wa Party fighters and continued to direct efforts against the Hussein regime from outside Iraq after the war ended; his intent fit nicely with Iran's and enabled Iran to use his leadership to continue to pressure Iraq.[125] Maliki accomplished this widespread effort through the well-established communications structure within the Da'wa movement, as well as through the larger Shia religious network. The communications network for al Da'wa consisted of party cells layered in cellular structure throughout Iraq, the Gulf states and Lebanon, and the religious schools, or *hawza*, where leading clerics taught Islamist doctrine and anti-communism among Shia student clerics.[126] Al-Maliki built on the ideas disseminated by Sadr who had supported Iran's revolution by sending messages targeting the Arabic population of Iran (located in the province of Khuzestan) to support Khomeini's revolution on the grounds that the state Iran was creating represented a continuation of the true nation founded by the Prophet Muhammad.[127]

Iran was also able to incorporate into its strategy non-Shia opposition groups, notably, the IMK. In the north, the IMK fought against the Ba'ath regime due to their opposition to Pan-Arabism versus Islamism; Iran was crucial in providing the fledgling

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[123] Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr in Shii Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980," 209, 215.

[124] Ibid., 218.

[125] Dexter Filkins, "What We Left Behind," *The New Yorker*, April 21, 2014, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2014/04/28/what-we-left-behind.

[126] Aziz, "The Role of Muhammad Baqir Al-Sadr in Shii Political Activism in Iraq from 1958 to 1980," 209–211.

[127] Ibid., 215.

group with training, operational support, financial support and sanctuary in Iran.[128] The Iranians approached the founder of the group, Sheikh Othman Abdul-Aziz to develop an Islamist-focused Kurdish militia to have a more ideologically compatible militia group fighting the Ba'athists in northern Iraq.[129] Although perhaps not a crucial player in the overall Iranian strategy, the IMK did indeed allow Iran to increase its reach through indigenous populations.

Iran's support to these proxy forces is almost a textbook example of resource mobilization in the sense of a political organization converting necessary resources into collective action, marking the first instance where it obtained access and placement within groups acting in Iraq that would serve as its agents. After the war between Iran and Iraq ended, Da'wa and SCIRI each played a prominent role in continuing the opposition to the Saddam Hussein regime and were among the first to return to Iraq after his regime was overthrown in 2003; IMK remained armed until 2003 when it joined the Kurdish Regional Government. Iran's influence strategy would pay off again years later, as the groups would assume increasingly larger roles in the Iraqi political system and members of these groups who had continued their opposition to Saddam, such as Nouri al-Maliki, would eventually take roles in the Iraqi provisional government following his ouster.

2. Iraq in the 2000s: The U.S.-Iraq War (2003–2011)

The 2003 U.S. invasion provided Iran with its next opening to take advantage of the destroyed status quo in Iraq and extend its reach throughout the Middle East. Reminiscent of the chaos and opportunity presented by the political turmoil and war in the late 1970s and 1980s, Iran and its main sponsored groups used the aftermath of the 2003 defeat of the Ba'athist regime to return to Iraq and be accepted as partners in the

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[128] David Romano, "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq," 8; Saed Kakei, "The Islamic Movement of Kurdistan: From Conflict to Cooperation," News, *Ekurd Daily*, (March 25, 2013), http://ekurd.net/mismas/articles/misc2013/3/state6950.htm.

[129] David Romano, "An Outline of Kurdish Islamist Groups in Iraq," 8; Martin van Bruinessen, *Agha, Shaikh, and State: The Social and Political Structures of Kurdistan* (Zed Books, 1992), 40, https://books.google.com/books?id=PGptAAAAMAAJ.

effort to re-shape the government by the U.S.-led coalition.[130] Iran acted to increase its influence through Iraq in order to pursue its main policy goals of ensuring Iraqi dependence on Iranian patronage for defense, economic, and political matters.[131] Iran's immediate strategic goals following the downfall of Hussein were to support the establishment of a dominant Shia political bloc and to train, equip and support pro-Iranian militias.[132] To establish the necessary political coalition, Iran was well prepared with pre-selected politicians, such as the previously discussed Nouri al-Maliki of the Da'wa Party and Abdul Azziz al-Hakim of the SCIRI. These two never really stopped fighting against the Ba'athists; Al-Maliki continued his opposition through political activism as well as clandestine warfare in Tehran and later Syria. He maintained close ties with both Iran and Hezbollah in Lebanon as he worked to conduct attacks against the Hussein regime throughout the Middle East in the period preceding the 2003 war.[133]

Similar to Maliki, Abdul Azziz Al-Hakim was another long-time Iranian proxy involved in Iraqi politics. He founded the SCIRI and was also the first commander of its militant wing, the Badr Brigades.[134] Hakim rose to prominence in post-war Iraq when, in its attempt to hasten the recovery from the war, the U.S. rushed to assemble an elected assembly to begin rebuilding the shattered country. By selecting Hakim to be one of the five leaders of the new government, U.S. General Jay Garner provided the Iranians with the opportunity to control the political landscape.[135] His selection over other influential Shia leaders like Maliki was somewhat ironic; al-Hakim was selected over Maliki because the Da'wa party resisted dealing with the Pentagon and DOD, instead preferring to work with civilians.[136]

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[130] Felter and Fishman, "Iranian Strategy in Iraq," 26.

[131] Kenneth Katzman, "Iran-Iraq Relations," Congressional Research Report (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, August 13, 2010), 2, http://fas.org/sgp/crs/mideast/RS22323.pdf.

[132] Ibid., 1–2.

[133] "Nouri Al-Maliki - Biography," *Biography*, accessed March 16, 2015, http://www.biography.com/people/nouri-al-maliki-504526.

[134] Chiara Sulmoni, "Abdul Aziz Al-Hakim : A Heavy Heritage," *CERMAM Profile*, accessed March 16, 2015, http://www.cermam.org/en/logs/portrait/abdul_aziz_alhakim_a_heavy_her_1/.

[135] Adel Darwish, "Entering a New Epoch," *Middle East*, June 2003, 23, 220643290, ProQuest Central.

[136] Ibid.

As the new Iraqi government developed, Iran's influence and power in Iraq continued to grow. Later, in the 2005 elections, the Shia political bloc United Iraqi Alliance took majority control over the newly formed government. Similar to Hakim, other SCIRI members were appointed to key cabinet positions throughout the war. Bayan Jabr served as the Minister of the Interior, Finance Minister, and Minister for Reconstruction and Housing. Perhaps one of the more extreme Shia hardliners, his tenure as Minister of the Interior was marked by recurring allegations of sectarian abuses and accusations of his turning the National Police into Shia death squads. One report even noted that the ministry's guards had beards shaved in the Iranian style.[137] Toward the end of U.S. involvement in Iraq, Iranian influence was used politically to ensure a Shia majority and hasten the United States' departure. In late 2010, Iranian Quds Force Commander General Qassem Suleimani negotiated directly with the Iraqi senior cabinet and other power brokers within the Iraqi government and essentially directed the course of Iraq's political direction for the next five years.[138] Maliki remained in office as prime minister, and the Americans were asked to leave in 2011.[139] Although Iranian influence did not totally dominate the coalition of Shia parties, its long-standing ties with the leaders of the country assured Iran of its ability to continue influencing Iraq's senior policy makers.

At the same time, Iran also employed Shia political parties and their armed wings to disrupt U.S. political influence and control within the country. Iran's approach was twofold: it supported the integration of Badr militia forces into the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior, and trained, advised, and equipped other Shia militias to attack U.S. forces independently.[140] By having a proxy group control the Ministry of Interior, Iran sought to pressure the U.S. into leaving Iraq by inflicting heavy U.S. military casualties and position itself to retaliate against the U.S. as needed in order to improve its bargaining

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[137] Christopher Allbritton, "Why Iraq's Police Are a Menace," *Time*, March 20, 2006, http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,1175055,00.html.

[138] Filkins, "What We Left Behind," 5.

[139] Filkins, "What We Left Behind."

[140] Katzman, "Iran-Iraq Relations," 4.

leverage regarding negotiations over Iran's nuclear program.[141] By empowering the Shia militias, Iran sought to replicate its success in Lebanon by countering U.S. influence in the region and preventing Iraq from becoming politically independent.[142] After the SCIRI took control of the government and appointed Jabr as Minister of the Interior, Jabr appointed several loyal Badr Brigade officials as key officers within the ministry.[143] These senior officials integrated Badr Brigade elements into the ministry's security forces as police commandos —newly appointed security forces who were later accused of conducting sectarian killings against Iraqi Sunnis, although these accusations were denied.[144] Furthermore, Badr officials were selected by Iran to work openly with the U.S., which gained the organization access to intelligence shared by U.S. forces and allowed them to pass along early warnings, enabling the militias to avoid U.S. targeting.[145] The continuing acts of violence and sectarianism served to increase uncertainty in Iraq and provided Iran the freedom to more directly influence daily events.

In addition to Iran's indirect support through the SCIRI, Iran also directly supported those Shia militias who conducted direct attacks against U.S. forces. Iran recognized that the Sadr Movement's Jaysh al-Mahdi militia (JAM) was a potent force on the battlefield and began to provide it weapons and training in 2005.[146] However, JAM's ability to attack U.S. forces waned in 2008 when the group suffered setbacks at the hands of U.S. and Iraqi security forces amidst a political split from Prime Minister al-Maliki. The reduction of political clout forced al-Sadr to de-escalate his aggression towards the U.S., and he subsequently disbanded much of his militia to focus on politics.[147] Instead of lowering Iran's overall capability to employ violence against the U.S., the

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[141] Ibid., 5.

[142] Michael Knight, "The Evolution of Iran's Special Groups in Iraq," *CTC Sentinel* 3, no. 11–12 (November 2010): 12.

[143] James Rupert, "Secret Death Squads Feared among Iraq's Commandos," *The Seattle Times*, November 17, 2005, http://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/secret-death-squads-feared-among-iraqs-commandos/.

[144], "*Frontline—Gangs of Iraq:* An Interview with Bayan Jabr," by Martin Smith, *Frontline*, PBS, November 21, 2006, http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/gangsofiraq/interviews/jabr.html.

[145] Knight, "Evolution of Iran's Special Groups," 13.

[146] Katzman, "Iran-Iraq Relations," 2.

[147] Ibid., 3.

disengagement of Sadr's militia merely fractured the group into several hard-core groups that remained committed to Iran's strategy.[148] These militias, dubbed by the U.S. as Iranian "Special Groups," continued to attack U.S. forces and represented a more singularly focused version of proxy forces than the earlier Sadrist militia. The main groups, Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq (AAH), Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), and the Sadrist Promised Day Brigades (PDB), received specialized training from Iranian operatives and Lebanese Hezbollah agents, as well as specialized munitions like the explosively-formed penetrator IED.[149] Iran's proxy forces became a more capable and sophisticated tool for Iran to destabilize Iraqi politics. In addition to IEDs, Special Groups elements were capable launching artillery and rocket attacks against U.S. forces; they also developed a discrete assassination capability to target select Iraqis in order to control politics.[150]

While not able to be consistently analyzed through the lens of the political process model, Iran's 30-year campaign to subordinate Iraq can be viewed as primarily a political struggle that features many characteristics of a social insurgency. The original Shia Iraqi opposition groups Da'wa and the SCIRI focused on attacking the Hussein regime, and also spent considerable effort mobilizing political support for themselves in preparation for an eventual return to Iraq. Through the establishment of organizations such as the Joint Action Committee (JAC), first established in Damascus in 1990, the Da'wa Party and SCIRI with other oppositional groups met to coordinate efforts against the Saddam Hussein regime at numerous conferences in 1990 and 1991 to discuss plans to topple Hussein's government and even explored the possibility of forming a government-in-exile.[151] Iran, on the other hand, held larger regional ambitions, and sought to bring about political change following the Iranian Revolution by calling for Islamist revolutions throughout the Middle East, particularly in Iraq. Iran took advantage of the crisis precipitated by the U.S. invasion in 2003 to send in the already-mobilized Da'wa and

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[148] Ibid., 3–4.

[149] Knight, "Evolution of Iran's Special Groups," 13–14.

[150] Ibid., 15.

[151] Hamid al-Bayati, *From Dictatorship to Democracy: An Insider's Account of the Iraqi Opposition to Saddam* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, Incorporated, 2011), 25–26, https://books.google.com/books?id=jwrDAgAAQBAJ.

SCIRI parties, who were by this time mature from 20 years of conflict against the Ba'athists and were able to take advantage of a more permissive political environment. Even Sunni groups like the Kurdish Democratic Party and Patriotic Kurdish Union have had long-standing ties to Iran originating from the Iran-Iraq War.[152] Iranian support in Iraq appears to be paramount. Other groups like Ahmed Chalabi's Iraqi National Congress, who were primarily tied to the U.S., proved unable to retain power for an extended amount of time.

Similar to Iran's earlier co-optation of Shia opposition groups to fight against the Hussein regime, Iran sought to leverage the Shia indigenous organizations' members, incentives, communications structure, and leadership to influence the Iraqi government and increase Iran's overall influence throughout the Middle East region. The long-standing relationship developed between Iran's Quds Force and its sponsored proxy forces has directly enabled Iran to increase its influence throughout the Iraqi government. Iran took advantage of the years following the Iran-Iraq War to expand its sponsored groups from the early Islamist opposition groups al-Da'wa and the SCIRI, to Hezbollah (which operated as trainers in Iraq), the Badr Brigades, the Mahdi Army, and numerous other cells organized for special attacks and political influence.

Iran made extensive use of these Shia militia groups to recruit fighters to stage attacks against the U.S. Planning for efforts to counter the U.S. began before the U.S. invasion of Iraq as early as 2002, with the Supreme Leader Khamenei instructing his senior advisors to "adopt an active policy in order to prevent long-term and short-term dangers to Iran."[153] With this guidance, Iranian intelligence services and the Quds Force began to organize its sponsored groups to prepare to re-enter Iraq.[154] After the downfall of the Hussein government, some 12,000 members of the Badr Brigades moved into Iraq

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[152] Michael Eisenstadt, "Iran and Iraq," Iran Primer (Washington, DC: U.S. Institute For Peace, 2010), 3, http://iranprimer.usip.org/sites/iranprimer.usip.org/files/Iran%20and%20Iraq.pdf.

[153] Michael Ware, "Inside Iran's Secret War for Iraq," *Time*, August 15, 2005, http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1093747,00.html; Kimberly Kagan, "Iran's Proxy War against the United States and the Iraqi Government," Iraq Report (Washington, DC, May 2006), 5, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/reports/IraqReport06.pdf.

[154] Kagan, "Iran's Proxy War," 5.

and immediately attempted to seize control of certain areas in south and east Iraq.[155] Accompanying the Badr Brigades were Iranian agents. In addition to gaining intelligence on the forces and political dealings, these agents were tasked with reaching out to former regime officials and soldiers to recruit them into working for Iran against the U.S.[156] Iran did not limit its agents and sponsored militias to solely recruit single members, however. It engaged in wholesale bloc recruitment as well, sending Hezbollah agents to establish relations with Moqtada al-Sadr to recruit members and train his militia to conduct attacks against the U.S. as well; by 2003 Hezbollah trainers had established a cell within the Mahdi Army and in 2004, elements of the Mahdi Army began conducting ambush attacks against coalition forces with Iranian support.[157]

The adoption of the incentives structure allowed Iran to maintain and grow its network of opposition groups in the event of a crisis in Iraq. Through its narrative of Islamic Revolution and opposition to secular and westernized government, it has successfully co-opted the incentive structure of various Shia oppositional groups throughout the Middle East. For example, Hezbollah, critical to the training of Iraqi Shia militias following the U.S.-Iraq War and considered to be the most developed Iranian-sponsored organization, began as a response to the Israeli incursion into Lebanon in 1983.[158] In the years during the Iran-Iraq War and in its aftermath, Iran provided refuge to many Iraqi Shia fleeing the violence and retaliation conducted by the Hussein Regime.[159] This provided Iran the opportunity to monopolize oppositional groups' attitudes and objectives. The clearest example of Iranian influence of incentives, however, is the SCIRI. This group's ideology is precisely in line with Iran's; it prefers an Islamic government ruled by clerics and answerable to a supreme ayatollah. Through its history, the SCIRI has repeatedly shown its preference for Iran. During the 1991 Shia uprising in southern Iraq, Badr Brigade and SCIRI forces rose against government forces,

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[155] Ware, "Inside Iran's Secret War for Iraq."

[156] Edward T. Pound and Jennifer Jack, "Special Report: The Iran Connection," *U.S. News & World Report*, November 22, 2004, 3–5.

[157] Kagan, "Iran's Proxy War," 7–8.

[158] Ibid., 5.

[159] Pound and Jack, "The Iran Connection," 3.

carrying banners of SCIRI's founder al-Hakim as well as Ayatollah Khomeini.[160] In contrast, al-Da'wa's ideology calls for the formation of an Islamic government, but one governed by elected officials.

Critical to the recruitment of members and co-option of solidary incentives was Iran's leveraging of the system of communications resident within the various Shia groups and the larger Shia community. The use of fatwas issued by religious authorities is perhaps one of the best examples of this. The use of fatwas is certainly not a new phenomenon; during the 1991 Iraqi Shia Uprising, rebels convinced Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Abu al-Qasim al-Khoei, Iraq's leading Shia authority, to issue two fatwas calling for people to rise against the government, which helped the rebels gain popular support.[161] Later, in 2008 Da'wa activist and religious authority Grand Ayatollah Sayyid Kadhim al-Husseini al-Haeri issued a fatwa against a pending security agreement between the Iraqi government and the U.S.[162] While it was limited in its effect due to Haeri's not being a pre-eminent Iraqi scholar, the fatwa's reach was almost certainly significant as a strategic communications tool. Fatwas have the same authority as court rulings for Muslims, and while the choice to observe a fatwa can be more voluntary than other legal rulings, the credibility of fatwas and the support that they can engender can have a galvanizing effect within a Muslim community. The timing of Haeri's fatwa indicates the politics behind it; in the aftermath of the U.S.-Iraq War, Shia Ayatollahs in Iran refrained from any such rulings when Shia political groups needed U.S. support to reform the Iraqi government.[163] However, after the situation changed and Sunni insurgents were on the decline, Iran may have felt that it was appropriate to increase the pressure on the Iraqi government to break ties with the U.S. By couching its message in terms of a religious ruling, Iran ensured it would be widely broadcast and carry substantial credibility.

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[160] Joel Wing, "MUSINGS ON IRAQ: The 1991 Shiite Uprising In Southern Iraq," *MUSINGS ON IRAQ*, August 30, 2011, http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2011/08/1991-shiite-uprising-in-southern-iraq.html.

[161] Ibid.

[162] "Iraq, Iran: Shaping Perceptions of the U.S. Presence With a Fatwa" (Stratfor, October 22, 2008), https://www.stratfor.com/analysis/iraq-iran-shaping-perceptions-us-presence-fatwa.

[163] Ibid.

The clearest evidence of Iran's influence in post-war Iraqi politics was the large number of former agents who were appointed to political positions and acted with impunity against the U.S. until its withdrawal in 2011. In addition to the above-mentioned politicians such as Maliki, Hakim, Jabr, and Sadr, Iran assisted and supported numerous other figures to become battlefield commanders or prominent politicians. This allowed Iran to support the formation, training, and equipping of armed groups, and gave Quds Force commander Suleimani access to the highest levels of Iraqi government to direct the flow of events within the country. The most prominent battlefield commanders during the period following the downfall of the Hussein regime were Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis and Hadi al-Ameri. These two were long-time operatives who began working for Iran during the Iran-Iraq War and rose to become powerful militia leaders and representatives of Iran in post-war Iraq. Both were commanders of the Badr Corps. Muhandis led the Badr Corps in 1985 while Ameri started as a battalion commander in 1982 and later took over the Corps in the early 1990s.[164] Muhandis, however, got his start as a Da'wa Party agent who was tried and convicted in absentia for attacking the French and U.S. embassies in Kuwait, as well as the attempted assassination of the Kuwaiti Emir in the early 1980s.[165] In the aftermath of the U.S. invasion, these two commanders entered Iraq and took leading roles in the effort against the United States.

Muhandis served mainly as a military commander, but he was known for his close relationship as a personal advisor to Suleimani and an organizer of opposition fighter groups.[166] His main role was as a catalyst in the formation of new militant groups; he was charged with the formation of the Jaysh al-Mahdi's "Special Groups," consisting of AAH and KH. Muhandis was responsible for the training (done in cooperation with Lebanese Hezbollah advisors), equipping, funding, and employment of these groups to

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[164] European Iraqi Freedom Association (EIFA), "Biography and Record of Hadi Farhan Abdullah Al-Ameri," *European Iraqi Freedom Association*, September 20, 2014, http://eu-iraq.org/index.php/news/item/266-exclusive-biography-and-record-of-hadi-farhan-abdullah-al-ameri.

[165] Department of Treasury Press Center, "Treasury Designates Individual, Entity Posing Threat to Stability in Iraq," *U.S. Department of the Treasury Press Center*, July 2, 2009, http://www.treasury.gov/press-center/press-releases/Pages/tg195.aspx.

[166] Bill Roggio, "U.S. Sanctions Iraqi Hezbollah Brigades and Qods Force Adviser," *The Long War Journal*, accessed June 5, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2009/07/us_sanctions_iraqi_h.php.

conduct specialized attacks against U.S. and Coalition Forces.[167] After the creation of these groups, Muhandis personally led KH, as well as facilitated the logistical support to other groups, enabling them to use Iranian-made roadside bombs, sniper weapons, anti-aircraft missiles, and to employ infantry tactics, drastically improving the lethality and efficacy of the attacks against coalition forces.[168]

Similarly, Hadi al-Ameri used his position as a long-time SCIRI leader to return to Iraq and guide his organization in support of Iranian objectives. In contrast to KH, which chose not to work with the new Iraqi government, the Badr Organization was selected by Iran to work openly within the government,[169] and as Badr members established local control of Shiite areas, they developed good relations with the coalition forces in order to begin gathering intelligence on them.[170] Later, Badr Organization members flooded Iraqi security organizations and received appointments as cabinet-level ministers and elected officials. For example, Hadi al-Ameri was appointed as Transportation Minister, and was later accused of murdering Iraqi Sunnis in targeted violence, using his position to enrich his relatives, and giving key offices to Badr members.[171] Similarly, after Bayan Jabr was awarded the post of Interior Minister in 2005, he gave key appointments to Badr members and enrolled lower-level Badr fighters as police, creating the Special Police force and legitimizing the Badr Organization's militant forces.[172]

These examples illustrate the dual approach of Iran's primary agents: Muhandis worked from a military perspective, employing specialized cells who had received

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[167] Department of Treasury Press Center, "Treasury Designates Individual, Entity Posing Threat to Stability in Iraq."

[168] Ibid.

[169] Knight, "Evolution of Iran's Special Groups," 13.

[170] Kagan, "Iran's Proxy War," 5–6.

[171] European Iraqi Freedom Association (EIFA), "Hadi Al-Ameri"; "Iran Switching to Hard Ball in a Last Attempt to Control Iraq | Clarion Project," *ClarionProject.org*, November 9, 2014, http://www.clarionproject.org/analysis/iran-switching-hard-ball-last-attempt-control-iraq.

[172] Carl Levin, *Findings of the Iraqi Security Forces Independent Assessment Commission: Hearing before the Committee on Armed Services, U.S. Senate* (DIANE Publishing, n.d.), 154; Joel Wing, "From Bad To Worse: How Militias Moved Into The Iraqi Police Force, And The United States Failed At Nation Building," *MUSINGS ON IRAQ*, February 13, 2012, http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2012/02/from-bad-to-worse-how-militias-moved.html.

military training and equipment to launch ambush attacks against coalition and especially American forces; and Ameri, whose Badr organization took advantage of the power vacuum in the political landscape, took over entire ministries and filled them with loyal members to enrich the organization and legitimize its efforts to engage in sectarian violence and disrupt U.S. efforts at creating a democratic state. These two leaders, their lieutenants, and especially their senior commander General Qassem Soleimani of the IRGC enacted a comprehensive strategy to extend Iranian influence while at the same time disrupt any possible western influence.

3. 2013 to Present Day: Daesh and Iran's Regional Strategy

Since the withdrawal of the U.S. military Iran's strategy has focused on consolidating its gains made during the 2003—2011 U.S. occupation, and providing support to the Iraqi government in the face of the Daesh threat. This has been a multi-faceted strategy, ranging from financial investment, construction of religious tourism infrastructure, and commercial exports to the appointment of sponsored agents to office.[173] Most importantly, Iran used the vacuum left by the U.S. to assert its influence in Iraq starting with its support to Prime Minister Maliki. Many politicians in Iraq such as Maliki (who had been selected by Soleimani as the preferred candidate to take the post of prime minister during the 2010 elections) viewed the U.S. withdrawal as a reduction in political support, and turned to Iran.[174] Maliki reversed the earlier trend of reconciliation by attacking rival Sunni-dominated parties, appointing Iranian-backed agents like Hadi al-Ameri and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis to key cabinet positions, and purging the officer ranks of the Army of Sunni Arab and Kurdish officers and replacing them with officers loyal to himself, and ordering the arrests of his vice-president, Tariq al-Hashemi, and

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[173] Frederick W. Kagan et al., "Iranian Influence in the Levant, Egypt, Iraq, and Afghanistan" (Washington, DC: Institute for the Study of War, May 2012), 70–72, http://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/IranianInfluenceLevantEgyptIraqAfghanistan.pdf; Filkins, "What We Left Behind"; Ali Khedery, "Why We Stuck with Maliki — and Lost Iraq," *The Washington Post*, July 3, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/why-we-stuck-with-maliki--and-lost-iraq/2014/07/03/0dd6a8a4-f7ec-11e3-a606-946fd632f9f1_story.html.

[174] Dexter Filkins, "The Shadow Commander," *The New Yorker*, September 23, 2013, http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2013/09/30/the-shadow-commander; Frederick W. Kagan et al., "Iranian Influence," 71.

Minister of Finance Rafa al-Essawi.[175] Unfortunately, this antagonism of Sunni groups led to the unforeseen consequences by facilitating the emergence of Daesh.

The persecution of Sunnis gave rise to massive demonstrations beginning in December of 2012, whose subsequent crackdown by the Maliki government created the conditions under which Daesh could seize the initiative. Following the threats to arrest Minister of Finance al-Essawi, large protests broke out across Iraq.[176] Various Sunni political parties such as Mutahidun largely managed the protests, although the JRTN militia, a neo-Ba'athist group led by Saddam Hussein's former deputy, organized other protest sites.[177] Maliki's response varied between harsh and conciliatory throughout the first three months of the demonstrations, but in April 2013 the protest movement was pushed towards militarization after a raid by national SWAT forces killed over 40 unarmed protesters at the demonstration site at Huwija near Kirkuk.[178] While this exacerbated the tensions between Maliki and the Sunni movements, negotiations between the Maliki government and newly elected officials continued over the course of 2013 seeking an end to the standoff.[179] However, instead of trying to bring the movement to demand peacefully, Maliki chose instead to declare martial law in Ramadi, cutting off travel and cell phone access, declared that the Ramadi protest site was an al-Qaeda headquarters, and sent security forces to destroy the camp.[180] This prompted Sunni leaders in parliament to state that unless martial law was lifted, they would withdraw from government; Maliki acceded to their demands, lifted the siege of Ramadi, and withdrew the Army units surrounding the city.[181] Instead of ameliorating tensions, the sudden withdrawal precipitated a complete collapse of security. Local police in Fallujah and Ramadi chose not to stand against al-Qaeda while being threatened by the Army, and

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[175] Filkins, "What We Left Behind"; Khedery, "Why We Stuck with Maliki — and Lost Iraq."

[176] Kirk H. Sowell, "Iraq's Second Sunni Insurgency," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 17 (2014): 47.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Kirk H. Sowell, "Maliki's Anbar Blunder," *Foreign Policy*, January 15, 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/01/15/malikis-anbar-blunder/.

[179] Sowell, "Iraq's Second Sunni Insurgency," 52, 56–57, 59.

[180] Ibid., 60.

[181] Sowell, "Maliki's Anbar Blunder."

when the Army withdrew al-Qaeda elements (later referred to as ISIS, or Daesh) immediately moved to take over Fallujah.[182]

With a new insurgency in full swing by 2014, Iran moved quickly to support the Maliki government. Iran's first move was to send Soleimani with his Quds Force battalions to Iraq, where he immediately began planning with senior Iraqi leadership to counterattack Daesh elements that had taken over key cities.[183] Soleimani was able to accomplish this quickly by bringing together militias Iran had sponsored for decades led by Hadi al-Ameri and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, as well as others such as Qais al-Khazali of Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq to counterattack the rapidly advancing enemy.[184] Iran was aided in mobilizing Shia militias by Maliki as well as Ayatollah al-Sistani, who both issued calls for Iraqis to join the Iraqi Security Forces during sermons.[185] Maliki then took this opportunity to deputize the existing Shia militias in Iraq by forming the Popular Mobilization Committee, headed by his national security advisor Falih al-Fayyadh, yet commanded operationally by Muhandis.[186] This allowed for the redeployment of thousands of fighters from Syria, where Iranian-sponsored militias had been supporting the Assad regime's fight against oppositional forces, to Iraq. Since then, militia groups

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[182] Sowell, "Iraq's Second Sunni Insurgency," 60.

[183] Farnaz Fassihi, "Iran Deploys Forces to Fight Al Qaeda-Inspired Militants in Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2014, sec. World, http://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-deploys-forces-to-fight-al-qaeda-inspired-militants-in-iraq-iranian-security-sources-1402592470; Babak Dehghanpisheh, "Iran's Elite Guards Fighting in Iraq to Push Back Islamic State," *Reuters UK*, August 3, 2014, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/08/03/uk-iraq-security-iran-insight-idUKKBN0G30GG20140803; Patrick Cockburn, "Iraq Crisis: Iran to Step in to Defend Baghdad from Sunni Extremists," *The Independent*, June 14, 2014, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/iran-to-step-in-to-prevent-collapse-of-iraqi-state-9536275.html.

[184] Maria Abi-Habib, "Shiite Militias Decamping From Syria to Fight in Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, June 18, 2014, sec. World, http://www.wsj.com/articles/shiite-militias-decamping-from-syria-to-fight-in-iraq-1403051977; Phillip Smyth, "Policywatch 2268: Iranian Proxies Step Up Their Role in Iraq," *The Washington Institute*, June 13, 2014, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/iranian-proxies-step-up-their-role-in-iraq.

[185] Ali Mamouri, "Sistani Stresses Need for Unity Over Sectarianism in Battle for Iraq," *Al-Monitor*, June 16, 2014, http://www.al-monitor.com/pulse/originals/2014/06/iraq-isis-crisis-sistani-avoid-sectarianism.html; Ahmed Ali and Kimberly Kagan, "The Iraqi Shi'a Mobilization to Counter the ISIS Offensive," *Institute for the Study of War Iraq Updates*, June 14, 2014, http://iswiraq.blogspot.com/2014/06/the-iraqi-shia-mobilization-to-counter.html; Abi-Habib, "Shiite Militias Decamping From Syria to Fight in Iraq."

[186] Kirk H. Sowell, "The Rise of Iraq's Militia State," *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, 23 APR 15, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/2015/04/23/rise-of-iraq-s-militia-state/i7pv.

under IRGC direction and guidance have fought alongside Iraqi Army and special operations forces as a major component of the overall Iraqi campaign to defeat Daesh, and have seen action at such battles at Amerli, Jurf al-Sakher, and Tikrit.

The formation of the Popular Mobilization Committee can be thought of as the culmination of thirty years of Iranian sponsorship. To have these units recognized as a legitimate Iraqi force, with their corresponding political parties, represents a major victory of Iranian foreign policy. Ostensibly, Iran is using its patronage of various Shia militias to combat the terrorist organization. This patronage is part of Iranian strategy to wield regional power through non-state actors. Also prevalent, although perhaps less visible, is the growth of Iran's political influence within the Iraqi government, which is once again leveraging the crisis of the Baghdad government as a means to increase its sway. McAdam notes that regime crises increase the political opportunities for both members and non-members of the polity of a country.[187] General political instability not only undermines the advantage of the incumbent, but also encourages collective action by organized groups.[188] As Shia militia groups' increased mobilization leads to an improved bargaining position vis-à-vis the Iraqi government, the chances of the Iraqi government being able to control or repress these groups lessens because the government is either unable to attack or unwilling to expose itself to any political backlash.[189] Iran is then able to leverage this dynamic as an opportunity to cement a position for itself through its sponsored movement organizations and militias and increase its political power within Iraq while at the same time ensuring that Iraq is increasingly dependent on its aid for survival.[190]

C. CONCLUSION

In sum, Iran's persistent sponsorship of opposition movements in Iraqi society and national politics has been a major factor in its to-date successful strategy to gain

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[187] McAdam, "Micromobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism," 129.

[188] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 42.

[189] McAdam, "Micromobilization Contexts and Recruitment to Activism," 131.

[190] Ray Takeyh and Reuel Marc Gerecht, "Iran's ISIS Trap," *Foreign Affairs*, November 15, 2015, https://www.foreignaffairs.com/articles/syria/2015-11-15/irans-isis-trap.

influence. Iran's shared Shia identity with Shia Iraqis allowed it to further its goals through bloc recruitment of various Shia organizations and recruit new members through trusted channels. Iran has reportedly spent millions of dollars developing holy sites in Najaf, Karbala, Kadhimiya and Samarra, sites that are visited by multitudes of Shia pilgrims every year. In addition, Iran also sends clerics trained in Qom with Islamist ideologies to Iraq, where they presumably compete with local religious authorities for prominence. These clerics are vital in recruiting new members to their Islamist ideologies and were quite likely aided by widespread anti-U.S. sentiment prevalent in the later 2000s. With Iran's heavy investment in the military (through its militias), police, religious, and commercial pillars of support, it has ensured that many members of Iraqi society readily identify with Iranian goals.[191]

The Iran-Iraq War and the U.S.-Iraq War of 2003 illustrate two time periods with similar circumstances where Iran successfully co-opted the Iraqi Shia social movement to expand its influence. The upheaval caused by war created unique political opportunities for Da'wa and the SCIRI, which Iran made use of by providing political sponsorship and material support that enabled the two parties to take power in Iraq. Iran helped to change the structure of political opportunities in each war by mobilizing the parties' organizational resources and mentoring and directing each movement's organizational leadership, and has been assisting these groups in recruiting new members within Iraq. In return, Iran was given free rein to influence the Iraqi political hierarchy and shape policy decisions. Additionally, it gained the freedom to maneuver proxy forces against the U.S. to limit its influence in Iraq and the greater Middle East, and punish the Americans for any setbacks to their nuclear program negotiations, ultimately gaining an important victory in 2011 by forcing the withdrawal of American forces. Perhaps ironically Iran was aided in this by the U.S., whose strategic goal of establishing democracy in Iraq enabled Shi'a political groups to take power.

Iran's actions to establish its dominance in Iraqi affairs—even before the beginning of the Iran-Iraq War—give context to how Iran was able to insert itself so

[191] Robert L. Helvey, *On Strategic Nonviolent Conflict: Thinking About the Fundamentals*, 1st ed. (Boston, MA: The Albert Einstein Institution, 2004), 9, www.aeinstein.org.

quickly into the fight against Daesh in June of 2014; these actions also shed light on the challenges facing the U.S. as it attempts to regain lost influence in Iraq. Iran's strategy has resulted in its influence permeating many aspects of today's Iraqi government. To counter this requires an equally long-term strategic outlook and approach.

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IV. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF THE IRAQI DEFENSE NETWORK

To accurately focus efforts to counter Iranian influence throughout the Iraqi Defense Network, the network must be mapped, and its structure and power centers analyzed. This chapter uses social network analysis to visualize the various groups fighting against Daesh and where brokerage occurs at the tactical levels between these groups. This is important to understand because the mechanisms of Iran's influence strategy are most clearly visible at the tactical level; by recruiting militia groups to fight under their sponsored militia groups, IRGC commanders increase both their combat and political power to affect the course of events in Iraq. However, the overall strategic impact of the tactical level mechanisms is rarely analyzed, let alone understood.

Understanding the network structure of the IDN helps to answer one of the primary research questions: What is the strategic nature and extent of Iranian influence in Iraq? Analysis of the network also yields answers to several underlying questions—who are the brokers within the network? Where does brokerage occur for pro-Iranian actors and groups? What is the mechanism of brokerage? Moreover, how are each of the sub-groups connected to Iranian influence? Developing a thorough understanding of this will assist in determining courses of action to counter Iran's powerful sway over the network.

A. DATA AND METHODS

The network data have been drawn from a combination of classified and open source media.[192] To define a starting point for coding the network, information on top officials involved in the fight against Daesh was collected from open sources such as Wikipedia pages, news reports, journal articles, twitter feeds and Facebook profiles.

Due to the size and complexity of the data involved, I initially imposed nominalist boundaries in order to simplify data collection and gain insight into the network, however

[192] Except where noted, Organizational Risk Analyzer (ORA) is used to generate all network graphs and calculate all network metrics.

as new information was discovered the boundaries became realistic in nature.[193] I identified actors who hold a position in an Iraqi Security Forces unit such as the Iraqi Special Operations Forces or a recognized militia such as the Badr Organization or Asa'ib Ahl al-Haq,[194] and added actors outside of the Iraqi Army and Ministry of Defense who significantly influence overall security planning and the conduct of operations within Iraq. These actors include foreign officials such as IRGC Commander General Qassem Soleimani, politicians such as the Iraqi Prime Minister Haider al-Abadi and Minister of the Interior Mohammed al-Ghabban, who is a member of the Badr Organization. Militia commanders such as Hadi al-Ameri of the Badr Organization and Qais al-Khaz'ali of AAH lead semi-legitimate forces against Daesh on behalf of the Iraqi government and in close coordination with Iraqi Army forces.

After conducting the initial research into the organization, analysis revealed several types of ties that were important for understanding Iranian influence. It became apparent that ties such as communications and colleague networks, and shared organizational affiliation ties among the actors in the network were relevant to understanding brokerage within the network. As more information on the network was collected, it became clear that the ISF was not the only player on the battlefield. In particular, the central role of Shia militia leaders, which likely resulted from Iraq's Shia government mobilizing additional forces to combat the Daesh threat, became clear.[195] The resulting network consisted of 120 individuals, 88 organizations, and five events. It is presented in Figure 1 in which individuals are represented by red nodes, and organizations and events by green nodes.

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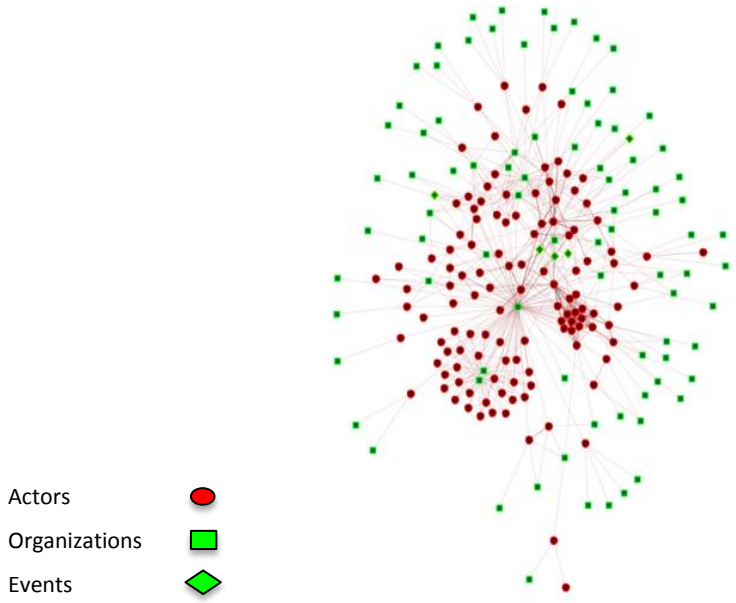
[193] Boundary specification is described in realist and nominalist terms. A nominalist strategy uses artificial boundaries imposed on a network rather than a boundary that is defined by those within the network, which is thought of as a realist boundary strategy. See Sean F. Everton, *Dark Networks*, 77–78.

[194] In English, The League of the Righteous.

[195] The fatwa issued by Ayatollah Sistani in June 2014 (see Matt Schiavenza, "Why Ayatollah Al-Sistani's Iraq Fatwa Is So Important," *International Business Times*, June 13, 2014, http://www.ibtimes.com/why-ayatollah-al-sistanis-iraq-fatwa-so-important-1600926) gave the Shia militias the legal freedom to officially take part in the fight and provided top cover from the Iraqi central government sanctioning their presence on the battlefield. In comparison, Sunni militia groups were left out of the fight, with the proposed Iraqi National Guard legislation stalled in Parliament (see Ariel I. Ahram and Frederic Wehrey, "Harnessing Militia Power: Lessons of the Iraqi National Guard," *The Brookings Institution*, May 27, 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/05/27-militias-iraq-national-guard).

Figure 1. IDN, Two-mode Network Visualization



Iranian influence is captured from this network using the aggregation of several relational ties depicting the various forms that this influence has taken, using a ties developed in a team project codebook.[196] In addition, the network was further categorized in terms of the broad interest they represent: Iranian agents (yellow), Iraqi political actors (red), Iraqi Security Forces (green), Sunni tribes and militias (blue), or Shia militias (purple).[197] While the ties mainly reflect personal influence, they also capture conduits for the mobilization of resources and other types of support.[198] The ties show how Iranian agents have become embedded within the network and have established themselves as top-level brokers. Closer study shows where brokerage allows for new groups to join with those close to Iranian power.

In order to analyze the network with basic social network analysis metrics and algorithms, it is first necessary to transform the two-mode organizational and event

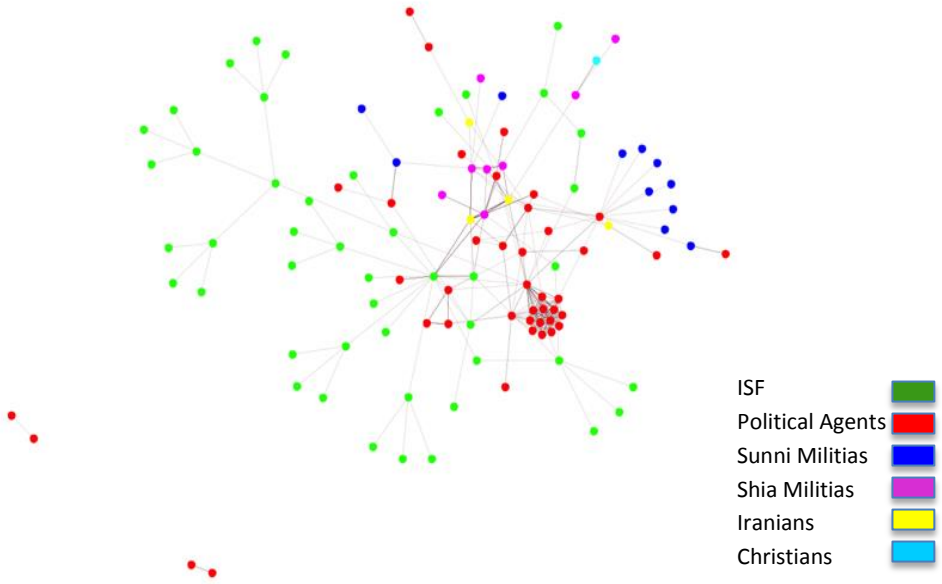
[196] Ties were defined using a team project codebook develop by Dan Cunningham, Associate Professor, DA Department, and are shown in Appendix 1. While the codebook defined 20 relational ties, only ties relevant to the network were considered.

[197] The affiliation attribute categories give a rough approximation of the major sub-groups of the network, and help to demonstrate overlap and brokerage.

[198] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 18.

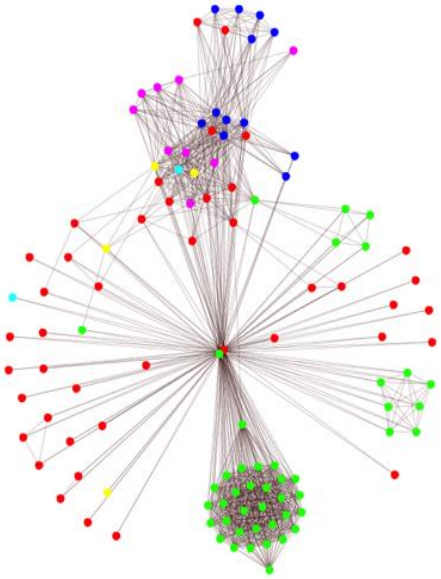
affiliation networks into a series of one-mode networks.[199] This was unnecessary for the colleagues and communication networks since they were already one-mode networks. Such a transformation generally assumes that two actors share a tie if they are affiliated with the same organization or participated in the same event. Here, this is probably an unreasonable assumption and, in fact, leads to an overly dense network. Thus, only ties of strength two or more (i.e., when two actors shared two or more organizational or event affiliations) were retained. That is, ties with a strength of less than or equal to one were removed from the network. In the end, we were left with two sets of networks, the communication and colleagues network and the shared organizational and event network. They are presented in Figures 2 and 3, respectively.

Figure 2. Communications and Colleagues Network by Major Subgroup



[199] A one-mode network consists of a single set of actors (e.g., individuals) and the ties between them. A two-mode network consists of two sets of actors (e.g., individuals and organizations) in which the ties are between the two types of actors (e.g., between individuals and organizations) but not within a set of actors (e.g., individual to individual or organization to organization).

Figure 3. Shared Organizational and Event Network by Major Subgroup (Tie Strength Greater Than One)



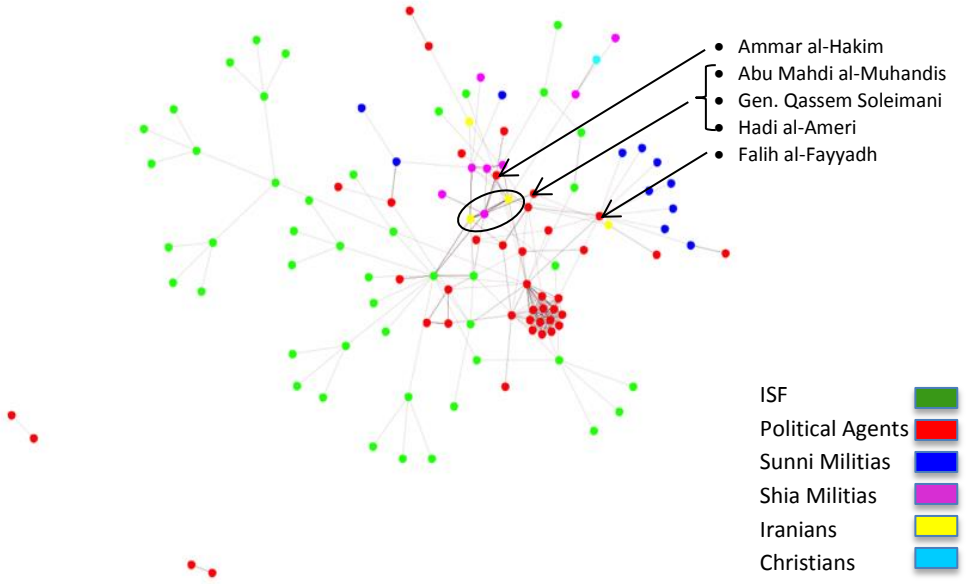
B. NETWORK OVERVIEW

The IDN consists of groups, organizations, and individuals who are engaged against Daesh in Iraq and includes individuals from the Iraqi Special Operations Forces, SOCCENT's main partner, other elements of the Iraqi Security Forces, political establishment, religious authorities, tribal and militia groups, and external agents from Iran. The actors in the network are members of numerous sectors and levels of Iraqi society but can be broadly grouped into Iraqi Security Forces, Sunni militias (including Kurdish and western Al-Anbar tribes), Shia militias, and political actors. Each of these subgroups works loosely with the other to defeat ISIS elements on the battlefield and bring stability to Iraq, with the exception of the Shia militias that are heavily influenced and largely controlled by Iran's Quds Force.

Iran exercises its influence mainly through the sponsorship of militias and political parties (who grew out of their original militia and opposition group forms to join the political process in Iraq in the post-Saddam period of 2003–2011). This sponsorship is one of three main avenues of Iranian influence exercised throughout Iraq; the other two being the promotion of Iranian religious influence throughout the Shi'a establishment and

Iran's positioning itself to act as a political arbiter to settle disputes.[200] Iranian representatives, such as General Qassem Soleimani, and Shia militia leaders Hadi al-Ameri and Abdul Mahdi al-Muhandis are embedded firmly within the center of the network, shown in Figure 4. This reflects their involvement in the popular mobilization units, *Hashed al-Shaabi*. Also prominent are political leaders such as the National Security adviser, Falih al-Fayyadh (titular head of the *Hashed*), and Supreme Islamic Iraqi Council leader Ammar al-Hakim, whose organization was the forerunner and sponsor of many of the Shia militias fighting in Iraq today.

Figure 4. Communications and Colleagues Network



1. Major Subgroup Affiliations

While Iranian influence is pervasive throughout the IDN, it is by no means uniform. Each of the major affiliation subgroups in the IDN is affected by Iranian influence in different ways, based on their relationship with the major Iranian actors. The political actor subgroup consists of members of the Iraqi national parliament, senior

[200] Alireza Nader, "Iran's Role in Iraq: Room for U.S.-Iran Cooperation?," Perspective: Expert Insights on a Timely Policy Issue (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2015), 3, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/perspectives/PE100/PE151/RAND_PE151.pdf.

cabinet officials, and other governmental figures like provincial governors and local politicians. This group has struggled to assert control over the other subgroups and is subject to pressure not only from the U.S. military and IRGC groups (in the prosecution of the fight against Daesh) but also from the Shia and Sunni militia. The Iraqi government controls the ISF most tightly with formally established lines of authority as well as financial and equipment resources, yet it is unable to ensure that the ISF has the necessary resources and leadership to prevent major losses. This became apparent in the loss of Mosul in 2014, where an entire operational command and city police forces crumbled in front of an advance of only 800 fighters.[201]

Within this group Nouri al-Maliki, Hadi al-Ameri, and Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis are notable for their overlapping membership between Iranian and Iraqi political interests. These actors have a long history with Iran and are heavily involved in the fight against ISIS. They are long time operatives of groups sponsored by Iran, and have conducted and coordinated strike operations against Ba'ath Party forces during the Iran-Iraq War as well as against U.S. forces following the US-Iraq war of 2003 (in the case of al-Muhandis). During the period after the fall of the Hussein government, they each have held cabinet positions and currently hold senior leadership positions in their respective political parties. Opposite from the Iranian-influenced politicians and cabinet members are actors such Ayad Allawi, Ahmed Chalabi (although recently deceased),[202] and Massoud Barzani, who have historically been pro-U.S. in their stances and political dealings. It cannot be said, however, that these politicians have zero tolerance for Iran. In the 1980s, Barzani's KDP militias fought alongside Iran against the Baa'th Party.

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[201] Ned Parker, Isabel Coles, and Raheem Salman, "How Mosul Fell: An Iraqi General Disputes Baghdad's Story," *Reuters*, October 14, 2014, http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/10/14/uk-mideast-crisis-gharawi-special-report-idUKKCN0I30ZA20141014; Martin Chulov in Beirut, Fazel Hawramy in Irbil, and Spencer Ackerman in New York, "Iraq Army Capitulates to Isis Militants in Four Cities," *The Guardian*, June 11, 2014, http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/jun/11/mosul-isis-gunmen-middle-east-states.

[202] Although considered as pro-American, Chalabi is a controversial figure who has been discredited for providing false intelligence and is seen by some as an Iranian agent in Iraq. See Dexter Filkins, "Where Plan A Left Ahmad Chalabi," *New York Times*, November 5, 2006, sec. Magazine, 9–10, http://www.nytimes.com/2006/11/05/magazine/05CHALABI.html; Michael Eisenstadt, Michael Knights, and Ahmed Ali, "Iran's Influence in Iraq: Countering Tehran's Whole-of-Government Approach," Policy Focus (Washington, DC: Washington Institute for Near East Policy, April 2011), 23, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/uploads/Documents/pubs/PolicyFocus111.pdf.

The Sunni Militia subgroup is composed of Sunni Arab tribal groups fighting Daesh.[203] It is led by figures such as Sheikhs Ahmed Abu Risha and Ali Hatem Ab'd al-Razzaq Ali al-Dulaimi. Many of these tribes are attempting to mobilize government-sanctioned tribal defense forces under the popular mobilization program.[204] Since gaining the initial agreement, however, the effort has largely stalled due to mistrust between members of the Shiite-dominated central government and the tribal militias. Despite the political headwinds, some Anbar tribal militias have fought in the battles to defend Ramadi, and central Iraqi Sunni militias participated in the liberation of Tikrit. Fearing exclusion from the central government on one side and retribution from Daesh on the other, Anbari militia leaders have used this situation as an opportunity to gain concessions of greater autonomy from the central government, and equipment for their fighters.[205]

The ISF subgroup consists of actors in the Iraqi Army, the Special Operations Forces (a separate organization from the Army), and the Iraqi Police. The U.S. military, the Iraqi Army, and Iraqi SOF all have strong ties with each other, while the National Police are closer to the IRGC. This influence is represented at the top level by Minister of the Interior Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban, who is a senior official within the Badr Organization's political wing and maintains trust and loyalty ties to Hadi al-Ameri.[206] The ISF's disastrous performance has put the central government in a precarious situation; it is unable to take decisive action without relying on groups it does not have

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[203] While the Kurds are another major Sunni force fighting against Daesh, the study of Iranian influence within Kurdish groups is outside the scope of this thesis. For more information on Kurdish social networks, see Christopher M. Couch, "Aghas, Sheiks, and Daesh in Iraq: Kurdish Robust Action in Turmoil" (Master's Thesis, Naval Postgraduate School, 2015), http://calhoun.nps.edu/bitstream/handle/10945/45831/15Jun_Couch_Christopher.pdf?sequence=1.

[204] Hamza Mustafa, "Abadi Agrees to Anbar Anti-ISIS Volunteer Force," *Asharq Al-Awsat*, October 28, 2014, http://www.aawsat.net/2014/10/article55337984/iraq-abadi-agrees-to-anbar-anti-isis-volunteer-force.

[205] Ariel I. Ahram, "Harnessing Militia Power: Lessons of the Iraqi National Guard," *The Brookings Institution*, accessed June 14, 2015, http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/markaz/posts/2015/05/27-militias-iraq-national-guard.

[206] Loveday Morris, "Appointment of Iraq's New Interior Minister Opens Door to Militia and Iranian Influence," *The Washington Post*, October 18, 2014, http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/appointment-of-iraqs-new-interior-minister-opens-door-to-militia-and-iranian-influence/2014/10/18/f6f2a347-d38c-4743-902a-254a169ca274_story.html.

sufficient control over, and is effectively mortgaging the state monopoly on the use of force to defeat Daesh.

Shia militias arguably constitute the most powerful subgroup within the network. This subgroup consists of militia leaders and other actors such as the senior leaders of Ahl Asa'ib al-Haq (AAH), Kata'ib Hezbollah (KH), Badr Brigades, Promise Day Brigades (PDB), and Kata'ib al-Imam Ali (KIA). These militias have been active in Iraq and the greater Middle East since the 1980s (in the case of the Badr militias), and were recently employed against the U.S. and its allies following the downfall of the Ba'ath regime. This subgroup has numerous ties to the central government and the IRGC, and wields enough influence to pursue its own agenda. Ostensibly, actors in this subgroup are focused on military concerns, but their roles in the network indicate their larger goals. The Badr Corps, headed by Hadi al-Ameri and whose members claim 22 seats in the Iraqi Congress, makes no effort to hide its association with and loyalty to the IRGC and Iran.[207] In addition to having an already well-established organization, Shia militias have benefitted greatly from political assistance by leading governmental figures. The move to formally deputize the existing Shia militias through the Popular Mobilization committee essentially elevated non-state groups to legitimate state actor status. Recognizing these groups' effectiveness, the central government has given responsibility to coordinate operations Ameri, effectively subordinating the official Iraqi military and police forces to the militias, allowing Shia militias to then dictate the course of the fight.[208] Ameri has partnered with both Iraqi Army and IRGC commanders to plan operations; operations now involving Shia militias have welcomed IRGC assistance while spurning U.S. military advisers.[209] Iranian influence is most significant in this subgroup, due to the long-standing relationship between the IRGC and the individual militias. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis best typifies this influence. Widely considered to be Soleimani's right-hand man in Iraq, Muhandis was Ameri's commander in the Badr Brigades in the 1980s, has

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[207] Susannah George, "Breaking Badr," *Foreign Policy: Dispatch*, November 6, 2014, http://foreignpolicy.com/2014/11/06/breaking-badr/.

[208] Ali and Kagan, "The Iraqi Shi'a Mobilization to Counter the ISIS Offensive."

[209] Vivian Salama, "Iraq Militias Say They Don't Need U.S. Help in Anbar Operation," *Yahoo News*, June 12, 2015, http://news.yahoo.com/iraq-militias-dont-us-help-anbar-operation-184932908.html.

served openly as both a member of the Iraqi parliament (Da'wa Party) and a personal advisor to Soleimani.[210]

The IRGC subgroup consists of the Iranian advisors in Iraq who are partnered with the various Shia militias fighting against Daesh. Led by General Qassem Soleimani, this group represents Iranian interests in the fight against Daesh. Although little is known about the group's exact size, reports following Mosul's downfall placed the number equal to two battalions, and recent reports have accused Iran of sending as many as 30,000 operatives to Iraq.[211] The IRGC has made good use of its extensive ties with the Shia militias and the central government. By virtue of its history of sponsorship of historic Iraqi oppositional parties, the IRGC has strong, personal relationships with several Iraqi national leaders such as the former Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki.[212] The extent of Iranian reach throughout the Iraqi political and militias subgroups is clearly present. Figure 5 depicts the overlapping nature memberships between the major affiliate subgroups, and shows that Iran has at least one agent or an agent who is closely tied to each of these in the network. Mohammed Qureshi's status as a member of both the Security Forces (as commander of the MOI unit the Wolf Brigade) and the Shia militia in Figure 3 is uncertain, however, since Daesh reportedly killed him last year.[213]

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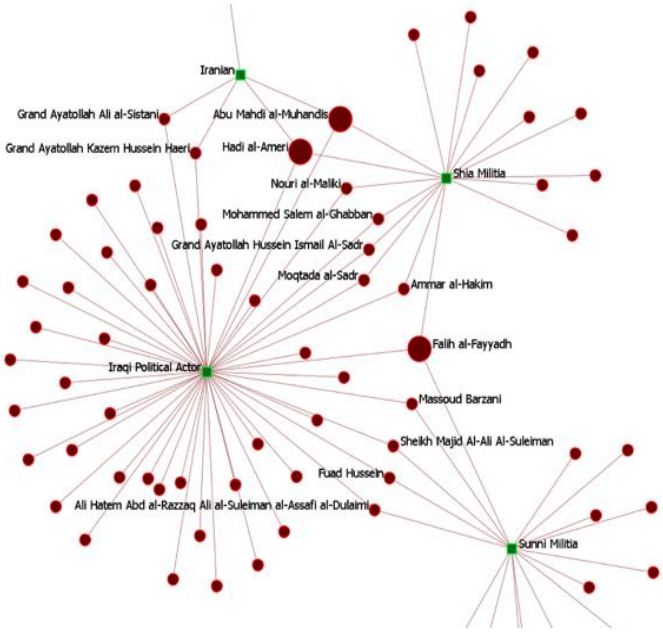
[210] UPI, "Abu Mahdi and Iran's Web in Iraq," http://www.upi.com/Top_News/Special/2010/10/07/Abu-Mahdi-and-Irans-web-in-Iraq/52371286478366/.

[211] Farnaz Fassihi, "Iran Deploys Forces to Fight Al Qaeda-Inspired Militants in Iraq," *Wall Street Journal*, June 13, 2014, sec. World, http://www.wsj.com/articles/iran-deploys-forces-to-fight-al-qaeda-inspired-militants-in-iraq-iranian-security-sources-1402592470; Al Jazeera, "Iran Accused of Sending 30,000 Troops to Fight in Iraq - Al Jazeera English," *Al Jazeera*, March 23, 2015, http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/03/iran-accused-sending-30000-troops-fight-iraq-150322212917339.html.

[212] Filkins, "What We Left Behind."

[213] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4yWN8CxcTA; http://isisstudygroup.com/?p=1480

Figure 5. Sunni Militia-Shia Militia-Political Actor Dual Membership. Agents With Ties to the Most Subgroups Are Enlarged.



C. NETWORK TOPOGRAPHY

Standard network topography measures for the IDN aggregated network are presented in Table 1. The communication and colleagues network's diameter and average distance are 10.0 and 3.745, respectively, which are much "wider" than the diameter and average distance of the shared affiliation network (3.0 and 1.223),[214] suggesting that the former network is somewhat more distributed than the latter. That said, the four sets of centralization and standard deviation measures indicate that the communication and colleagues network is more centralized than the shared affiliation network. Taken together they capture the fact that the communication and colleagues is more of a hub-and-spoke configuration, while the shared affiliation network consists of more distinctly separated clusters. The cohesion, average degree, clustering coefficient scores differ substantially between the two networks. In particular, they indicate that the shared affiliation network is far more connected than the communication and colleagues network.

[214] A network's diameter equals the longest shortest path (i.e., geodesic) between all pairs of connected actors in the network. Average distance equals the average path distance between all pairs of connected actors in the network.

Table 1. Network Topography Measures

Topography Measures	Communication and Colleagues Network	Shared Affiliation Network
Size	120	120
Diameter	10.000	3.00
Average Distance	3.745	1.223
Cohesion	0.278	0.967
Average Degree	2.975	90.367
Clustering Coefficient	0.316	0.962
Degree Centralization (in %)	17.95	17.73
Std Dev	5.025	12.880
Closeness Centralization (in %)	202.62	36.31
Std Dev	1.830	0.247
Eigenvector Centralization (in %)	37.40	2.37
Std Dev	0.084	0.030
Betweenness Centralization (in %)	35.48	20.83
Std Dev	353.364	152.362

1. Subgroup Analysis

The aggregated network was analyzed to determine the number of distinct subgroups within by using k-cores, Newman groups, and clique membership. Subgroup analysis is useful for determining dense clusters of actors sharing ties who have strong relationships with one another.[215] To better understand Iranian influence in the IDN, understanding how clusters of actors are formed and who is centrally or peripherally located among these subclusters within the IDN can help pinpoint nodes to target for removal, influence, or even monitoring in order to learn more about networks when one's knowledge is incomplete.[216] By combining the various measurements of clustering within the communications and colleagues and shared affiliation networks, a clearer picture begins to emerge regarding potential brokers of influence.

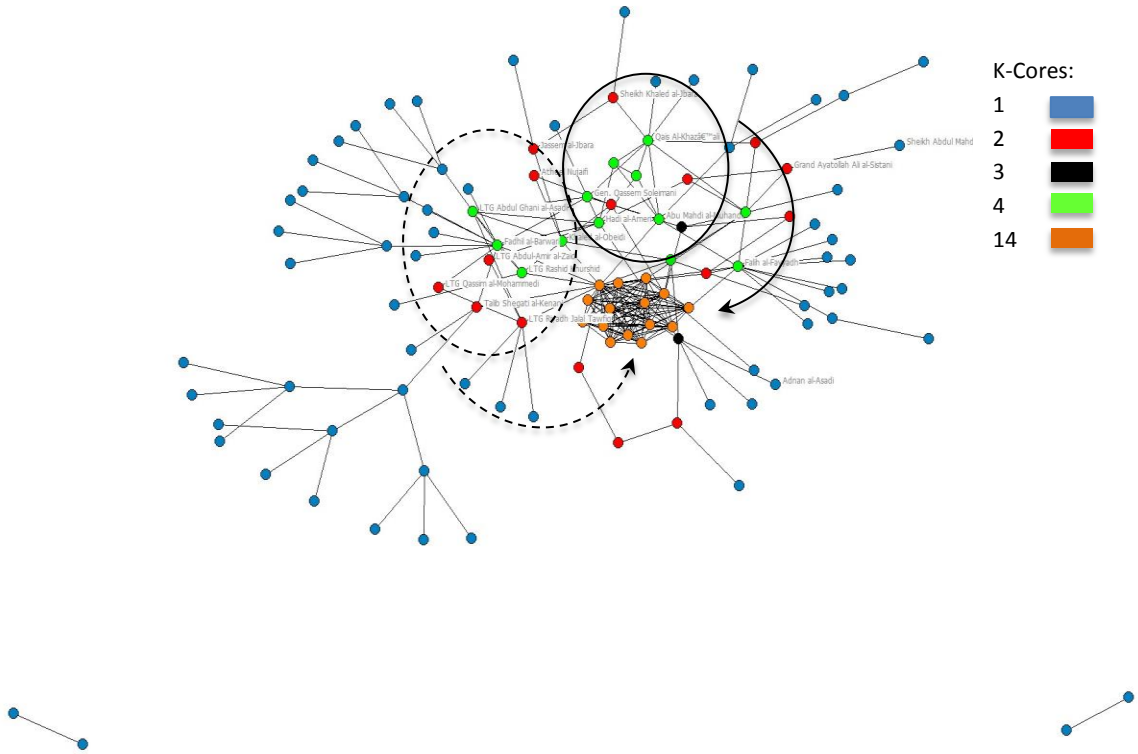
[215] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 170.

[216] Ibid., 204–205.

K-core analysis was used to identify pathways of Iranian influence with a focus on seeing where peripheral actors were located.[217] While k-core analysis did not reveal unknown pathways of Iranian influence, a possible pathway to increase U.S. influence was discovered. Figure 6 shows within the communications and colleagues network two areas that can be thought of as centers of influence within the network. The solid circle represents those actors who best represent Iranian influence, while the dashed circle can be thought of as those more open to U.S. influence. Both of these groups seek to influence mainly on the k-core subgroup that is colored orange, the central government officials. In order to begin counteracting Iranian influence from its center, the dashed circle can be viewed as one possible starting point from which the U.S. could begin to counter this influence through recruitment of known subordinates or associates of actors in the dashed circle group.

[217] K-Cores examine group clustering by identifying groups where an actor is connected by some number (*k*) to other group members; actors in a 2-core have at least two or more ties to all the other actors in the 2-core, actors in a 3-core have at least three or more ties to all other actors in the 3-core, and so on. Moreover, higher k-cores are nested within lower ones, meaning all actors in a 3-core also belong to the 2 and 1-cores. This suggests that actors located in lower k-cores are more peripherally located than are actors located in higher k-cores, and could be susceptible to recruitment by others. See Everton, *Dark Networks*, 182.

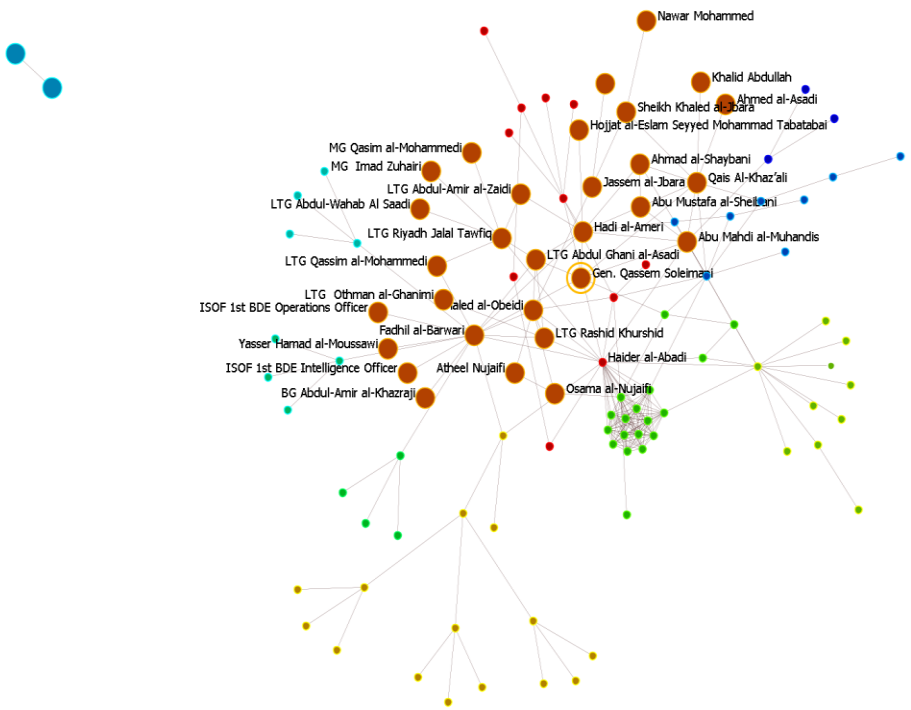
Figure 6. Communication and Colleagues Network, K-Core Analysis



A second algorithm used to detect clustering, Newman groups, captured an interesting aspect of Iranian influence. Newman groups identify subgroups where the density of ties within groups is greater than that across groups.[218] The algorithm partitioned the communication and colleagues network into eight subgroups with a modularity score of 0.5459, suggesting a moderately accurate grouping. Most notable was the breadth to which actors shared the same group as General Soleimani, noted in Figure 6. With this group showing more ties to each other than to the other subgroup, it is reflective of Soleimani's wide influence among senior leaders, and also can be compared with the peripheral actors identified in Figure to understand who is more strongly connected to Soleimani.

[218] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 195.

Figure 7. Communication and Colleagues Network, Node Color = Newman Groups. Nodes in the Same Newman Group as IRGC Gen. Soleimani are Enlarged.

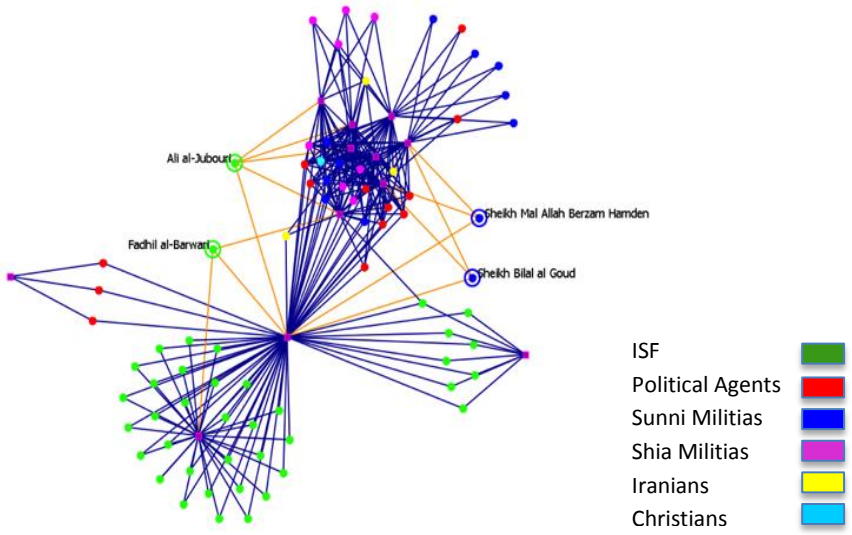


Clique membership provides an initial look into who among the network may be in a brokerage position. A clique in a network is a group where each actor has direct ties to every other actor in the group. Using clique analysis to identify subgroups is often problematic because it is often unreasonable to assume every actor of a subgroup is tied to all other actors in the group, and (2) actors can belong to multiple cliques.[219] However, clique membership can be used as a proxy for brokerage, by identifying actors with membership in multiple cliques. Figure 8 presents a visualization using a combination of the two networks where actors are tied to various cliques.[220] MG Fadhil al-Barwari and Ali al-Jubouri hold membership in multiple cliques, along with Sheikhs Hamden and al-Goud, and are also on the periphery surround hardline Shia actors, suggesting that they might be candidates with whom to establish closer ties.

[219] Ibid., 171.

[220] In this visualization, isolates and pendants (nodes with only a single tie) were removed to enhance clarity.

Figure 8. Clique Membership



a. Subgroup Analysis Discussion

Of the various subgroup and clustering algorithms ran on the IDN, Newman groups, k-cores, and clique membership most clearly showed the pathways of Iranian influence within the network. What is interesting is the inclusion of some of the top political leadership in the militia-related clusters such as Iraqi PM Haider al-Abadi, KRG president Massoud Barzani, and ISCI leader Ammar al-Hakim. Although these three are prominent politicians, they are also the heads of their groups' respective militias. As the Iraqi commander-in-chief, Abadi has become the *de facto* head of the deputized Shia and Sunni militias, while Hakim is the overall commander of several militias such as the Ashura Brigades,[221] and Barzani is the leader of the Kurdish *Peshmerga*.

D. NODE-LEVEL CENTRALITY

Node-level centrality metrics to determine who is the most central, or important, within the network. These metrics take into account the notion that some nodes are structurally central to a network, and builds on this by utilizing concepts taken from

[221] Phillip Smyth, "All the Ayatollah's Men," *Foreign Policy: Argument*, September 18, 2014, https://foreignpolicy.com/2014/09/18/all-the-ayatollahs-men/.

exchange theory that examine the nature of relationships in terms of the flow of information from one person to another to measure an actor's power within a network.[222] The major centrality measures consider a node's ties to other nodes (degree centrality), the number of ties to other central actors (eigenvector), how close each actor is to all other actors (closeness),[223] and the degree to which each actor lies on the shortest path between other pairs of actors (betweenness). By identifying the most central actors in the network, we can then tailor a strategy to more fully explore all potential avenues of influence.[224] Actor centrality scores were calculated for both the communication and colleague and the shared affiliation networks and the scores for the top 10 actors are presented in Tables 2 and 3.[225] Since Iranian influence is depends largely on brokerage between actors and subgroups with the IDN, betweenness and eigenvector centrality visualizations are displayed below in Figures 9–14, where node size varies in terms of centrality.

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[222] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 206.

[223] Closeness was measured using average reciprocal distances, which takes into account disconnected networks.

[224] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 252.

[225] Centralities were visualized using ORA; however, the ranking of each actor in the network as computed using UCINET. As a result, some of the node sizing may appear to be different than the table suggests. The labeled nodes were shown using the rankings computed in ORA.

Table 2. Communication and Colleagues Network Centrality Measures

RANK	DEGREE	CLOSENESS	BETWEENNESS	EIGENVECTOR
1	Haider al-Abadi (25.000)	Haider al-Abadi (6.615)	Haider al-Abadi (37.085)	Haider al-Abadi (38.836)
2	Fouad Massoum (18.000)	Fadhil al-Barwari (6.524)	Fadhil al-Barwari (26.477)	Fouad Massoum (36.970)
3	Ibrahim al-Jaafari (15.000)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (6.436)	Talib Shegati al-Kenani (18.530)	Ibrahim al-Jaafari (36.414)
4	Fadhil al-Barwari (15.000)	Falih al-Fayyadh (6.425)	ISOF 2d BDE Cdr (16.750)	Baha al-Araji (36.263)
5	Baha al-Araji (15.000)	Talib Shegati al-Kenani (6.422)	Falih al-Fayyadh (13.841)	Adel Abdul Mahdi (35.993)
6	Haidar Jassim Zamili (14.000)	Khaled al-Obeidi (6.408)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (9.093)	Roj Nouri Shawis (35.993)
7	Baqir Jabur al-Zubaidi (14.000)	Hadi al-Ameri (6.391)	Moqtada al-Sadr (8.439)	Mohammed Saleh al-Mutlaq (35.993)
8	Mohammed Iqbal Omar (14.000)	Hakim al-Zamili (6.384)	Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban (7.631)	Hoshyar al-Zebari (35.993)
9	Qassem Mohammed al-Fahdawi (14.000)	Gen. Qassem Soleimani (6.377)	Hadi al-Ameri (6.997)	Haidar Jassim Zamili (35.993)
10	Naseer al-Issawi (14.000)	Baha al-Araji (6.374)	Qais Al-Khaz'ali (6.785)	Mohammed Shia al-Sudani (35.993)

Table 3. Table Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation Network Centrality Scores

RANK	DEGREE	CLOSENESS	BETWEENNESS	EIGENVECTOR
1	Ayad Allawi (100.000)	Fadhil al-Barwari (56.975)	Fadhil al-Barwari (34.400)	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (34.328)
2	MG Qasim al-Mohammedi (100.000)	Hadi al-Ameri (55.797)	Hadi al-Ameri (11.578)	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (34.328)
3	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (37.000)	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (55.616)	Haider al-Abadi (9.681)	Nawar Mohammed (34.328)
4	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (72.000)	Nawar Mohammed (55.616)	Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban (9.175)	Khalid Abdullah (33.770)
5	Nawar Mohammed (37.000)	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (55.616)	Ali al-Jubouri (7.410)	Mohammed (LNU) (33.401)
6	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (37.000)	Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban (55.072)	Gen. Qassem Soleimani (5.398)	Hussein Abdulabbas (28.903)
7	Fadhil al-Barwari (36.000)	Khalid Abdullah (54.529)	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (3.438)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (28.498)
8	Khalid Abdullah (35.000)	Mohammed (LNU) (53.986)	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (3.438)	Hadi al-Ameri (28.390)
9	Mohammed (LNU) (34.000)	Haider al-Abadi (52.717)	Nawar Mohammed (3.438)	Moqtada al-Sadr (28.344)
10	Talib Shegati al-Kenani (32.000)	Gen. Qassem Soleimani (51.630)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (2.886)	Ryan al-Chaldani (28.228)

Figure 9. Communications and Colleagues Network, Node Size = Betweenness Centrality

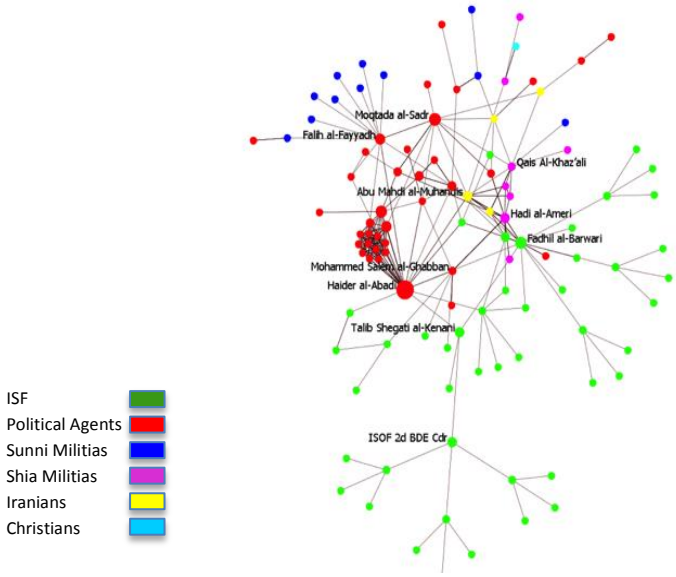


Figure 10. Communication and Colleagues Network, Node Size = Eigenvector Centrality

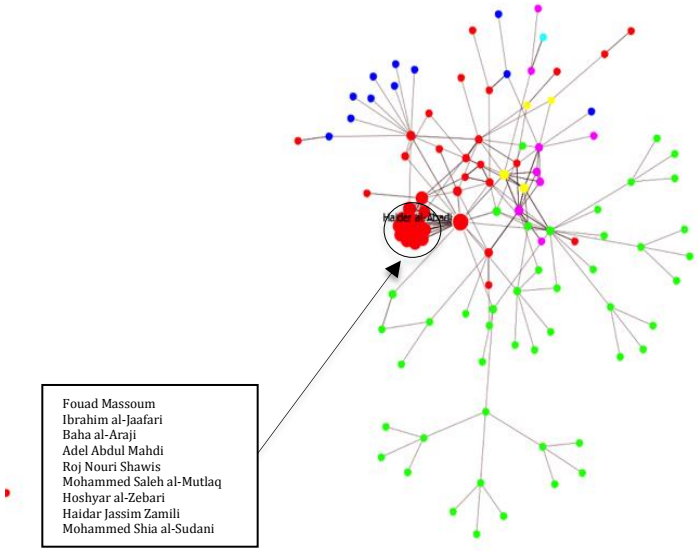


Figure 11. Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation Network, Node Size = Betweenness Centrality

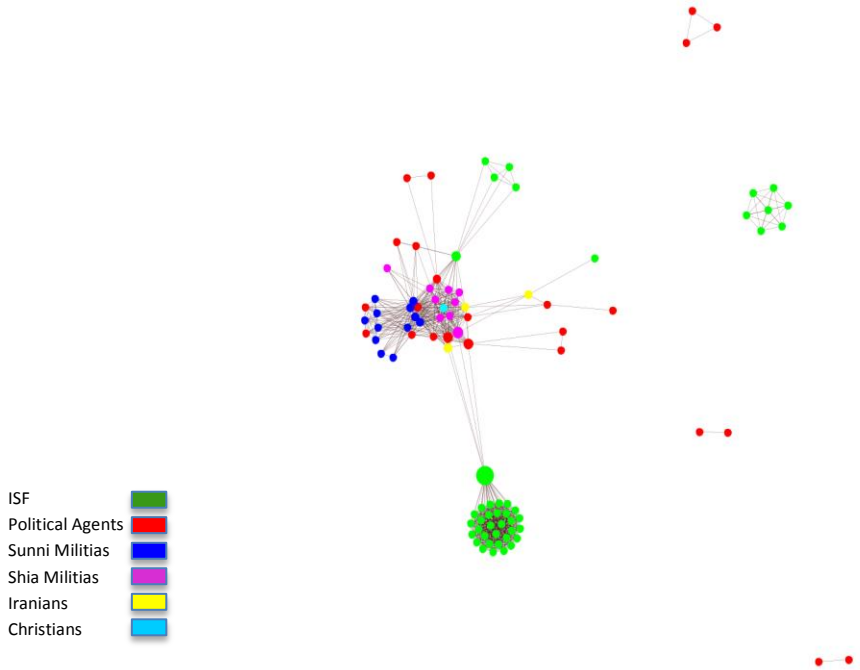


Figure 12. Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation Network, Node Size = Betweenness Centrality

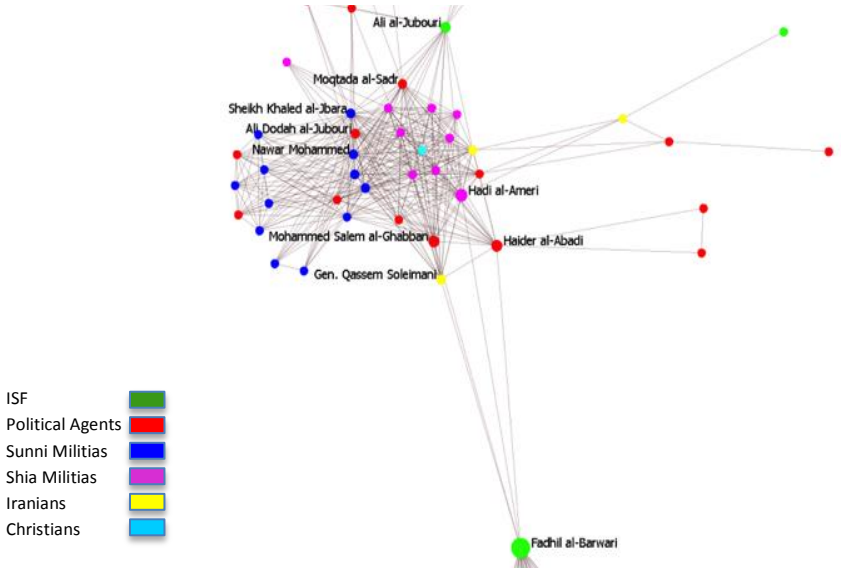


Figure 13. Shared Organizational and Event Affiliation, Node Size = Eigenvector Centrality

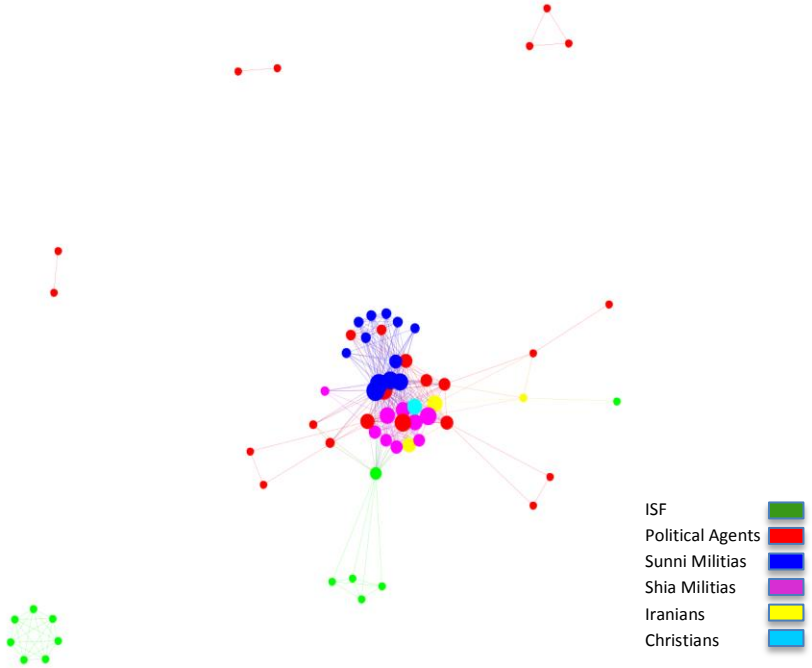
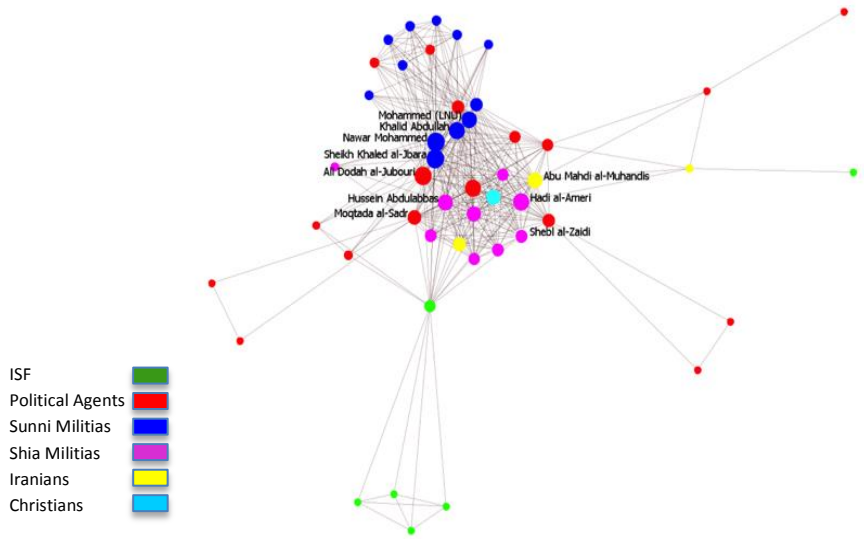


Figure 14. Shared Organizational and Event affiliation, Node Size = Eigenvector Centrality



a. Node-Level Centrality Analysis[226]

The centrality scores presented in Tables 2 and 3 confirm earlier assumptions that the most central actors in the IDN are those most associated with Iran and the Shi'a militias. Looking at the visualizations in Figures 9–14, the most central nodes are located in the portion of the network where the Iraqi Political Actor affiliation subgroup merges and blends with the Shi'a and Sunni militia ones. Perhaps unsurprisingly, Haider al-Abadi is the top central actor in the one-mode network, however he does not figure prominently in the two-mode network centralities. Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis appears in the top ten actors in both one- and two-mode networks, although he did not score as highly as he had in earlier iterations of the centrality computations. Two surprise actors in the rankings, however, are Fadhil al-Barwari and mayor Ali Dodah al-Jubouri. Barwari

[226] In order to properly assess the shared affiliation and event network, actors whose aggregated ties skewed the network were removed to allow for a more realistic assessment. Actors Ayad Allawi and MG Qasim al-Mohammedi skewed the shared affiliation and event network's centrality metrics due to their position directly in between the two major clusters after the minimum tie strength was raised to greater than 1.0. Their removal allowed betweenness centrality to be more accurately measured; with the two still in the network they scored as being completely central while every other actor in the network was minimized. In addition, while computing eigenvector centrality for the shared affiliation and event network, the ISOF cluster of actors was removed due to their presence skewing the metrics, possibly due to the E-I index for their cluster being closer to -1 (completely internally-focused).

took the top rankings in betweenness and closeness in both networks, despite being relatively outside the political actor and militia affiliation subgroups, reflective of his battlefield's importance. Ali Dodah al-Jubouri appeared in the top ten rankings in every category of the shared affiliation network, yet is not a highly ranked politician or a militia commander. Mayor Jubouri's village of al-Sharqat is an hour's drive north of Tikrit, which was recently liberated, and has been fighting against Daesh since June of 2014.[227] Upon initial investigation it is possible that he has several ties to both the PMP forces as well as the Iraqi Security Forces, and works both as a local political leader and fights as part of militia forces.

One issue was noted when visualizing eigenvector centrality. The structural positions within the ISOF brigades were skewing the overall eigenvector centrality scores and masking more realistic centrality measurements. This can possibly be attributed to an incomplete understanding of the IDN; it is likely that there are ties connecting the ISF subgroup (most likely on the Iraqi National Police side) to those with strong ties to Iran. We can trace this assumption to the Badr Organization's decision to participate in the political process, which resulted in their being given the portfolio for Iraq's security ministry in 2005.[228] To remedy this, the ISOF cluster was hidden and eigenvector centrality was recalculated. The new calculation showed that eigenvector centrality was held in the main cluster by those considered within the Iranian sphere of influence, shown in Figure 14. Each of the top ten actors had a tie to some form of Iranian influence through its sponsorship of Shia militias. This is interesting because it somewhat accurately reflects the reach of Iranian influence in Iraq. In the political and militias the Iranian ties are strong, whereas they are not in the security forces (primarily the Iraqi Army).

[227] Deborah Amos. "In Tikrit Offensive, Local Sunnis, Shiite Militias Are Unlikely Allies." News. *NPR Parallels*, 19 MAR 15. http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/03/19/394099648/in-tikrit-offensive-shiite-militias-form-unlikely-alliance.

[228] Wing, "MUSINGS ON IRAQ," February 13, 2012.

E. BROKERAGE

Similar to betweenness centrality, brokerage metrics take in account which actors occupy network positions by which they can control the flow of information and goods. Here actor brokerage is assessed using Borgatti's key player algorithm[229] and Gould and Fernandez's brokerage role analysis.[230]

Borgatti's Key Player algorithms focus on how sets of actors contribute to a network's cohesion. Two sets of measures exist. One (KPP-Negative) identifies the set of actors' whose removal will most fragment the network, while the other (KPP-Positive) identifies the set of actors through whom material and nonmaterial resources are most likely to diffuse rapidly through the network.[231] To identify the actors most critical to the spread of information and resources, we used the KPP-Positive algorithm to identify the set of five key players in the communication and colleagues and shared affiliations and events networks. The identified actors, then, are ideally located through each network in positions to control the flow of resources and press their control over others in the network. Of the top five actors identified, Fadhil al-Barwari, Osama al-Najafi, and Fuad Hussein stood out as accessible candidates; the other candidates mostly were centers of power for Iranian influence in the IDN.

Conversely, the KPP-Negative algorithm identified those actors whose removal would break up the network. This information is certainly valuable in strategies to disrupt Iranian influence. The results in Table 4 confirm that the removal of top Iranian leaders would likely disrupt and fragment the network. This makes sense when considering the roles played by Zaidi, Ameri, and Soleimani, who have strong ties with each other as well as other Shia militia leaders and political actors in Iraq. The Key Players are listed in Tables 4 and 5.

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[229] Stephen P. Borgatti. 2006. "Identifying Sets of Key Players in a Social Network." *Computational, Mathematical and Organizational Theory* 12:21-34.

[230] Roger V. Gould and Roberto M. Fernandez. 1989. "Structures of Mediation: A Formal Approach to Brokerage in Transaction Networks." *Sociological Methodology* 19:89-126.

[231] Borgatti, "Key Players," 22.

Table 4. Communications and Colleagues Key Player Set

Key Player (Positive)	Key Player (Negative)
Hadi al-Ameri	Shebl al-Zaidi
Haider al-Abadi	Hadi al-Ameri
Falih al-Fayyadh	Gen. Qassem Soleimani
Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban	Haider al-Abadi
Moqtada al-Sadr	Falih al-Fayyadh

Table 5. Shared Organization and Event Key Player Set

Key Player (Positive)	Key Player (Negative)
Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis	Haider al-Abadi
Osama al-Nujaifi	Ali al-Jubouri
Fadhil al-Barwari	Fadhil al-Barwari
Fuad Hussein	--
Haidar Al-Gharab	--

Brokerage between affiliation groups was also measured using the Gould and Fernandez brokerage role algorithm, which captures the importance that group affiliation plays in brokerage and are listed below in Table 6.[232] While many of the top ranked nodes are Iranian-sponsored agents, actors such as Chaldani, Ali Dodah al-Jubouri and Ali al-Jubouri are possible candidates to approach due to their roles as consultant, coordinator, and gatekeeper, respectively. The role of Dodah al-Jubouri as an internal

[232] Everton, *Dark Networks*, 277.

coordinator is appealing since his score indicates that he could be highly involved in organizing information and resources with the IDN. His role as a local mayor places him at the tactical, micro level that is not easily seen and merits further consideration.

Table 6. Gould and Fernandez Brokerage Scores

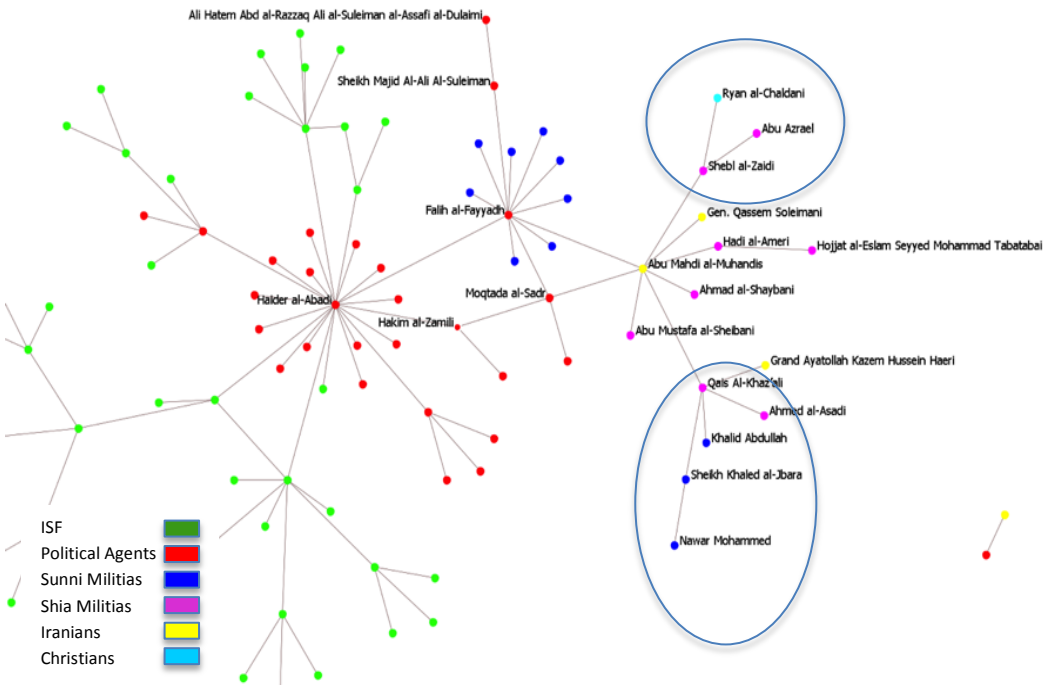
RANK	COORDINATOR	GATEKEEPER	REPRESENTATIVE	CONSULTANT	LIAISON	TOTAL
1	Khalid Abdullah (237)	MG Qasim al-Mohammedi (510)	Khalid Abdullah (507)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (480)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (1505)	Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis (2229)
2	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (144)	MG Raed Shakir Jawdat (471)	Haider al-Abadi (345)	Hadi al-Ameri (464)	Hadi al-Ameri (1372)	Abu Azrael (2034)
3	Haider al-Abadi (143)	MG Kazim Fahdawi (469)	Abu Azrael (335)	Abu Azrael (418)	Abu Azrael (1172)	Ryan al-Chaldani (2032)
4	Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban (134)	ISOF 2d Co, 2d Bn, 2d BDE Cdr (457)	Ryan al-Chaldani (334)	Ryan al-Chaldani (418)	Ryan al-Chaldani (1172)	Hadi al-Ameri (1925)
5	Mohammed (LNU) (127)	Haider al-Abadi (439)	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (308)	Shebl al-Zaidi (404)	Tariq al-Hashemi (1109)	Shebl al-Zaidi (1655)
6	Nawar Mohammed (127)	Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (428)	Ali Dodah al-Jubouri (284)	Khaled al-Khazraji (400)	Shebl al-Zaidi (1026)	Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (1585)
7	Qais Al-Khaz'ali (118)	Ali al-Jubouri (389)	Sheikh Mal Allah Berzam Hamden (281)	Ammar al-Hakim (394)	Khaled al-Khazraji (920)	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (1540)
8	Moqtada al-Sadr (113)	Haidar Al-Gharab (382)	Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban (239)	Falih al-Fayyadh (391)	Hussein Abdulabbas (879)	Adel Abdul Mahdi (1504)
9	Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani (111)	Adel Abdul Mahdi (372)	Mohammed (LNU) (222)	Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara (372)	Falih al-Fayyadh (875)	Falih al-Fayyadh (1503)
10	Haidar Al-Gharab (88)	Mohammed Salem al-Ghabban (372)	Nawar Mohammed (222)	Hussein Abdulabbas (341)	Ammar al-Hakim (871)	Ammar al-Hakim (1502)

The last form of brokerage noted in the IDN is not strictly an SNA measure but is important to the overall network. The recent development of bloc recruitment of entire militia groups under the major Shi'a militias sponsored by Iran is a clear example of the Iranian influence strategy at the tactical level. The bloc recruitment of groups who want to fight Daesh gives Iran and its sponsored militia groups access to already mobilized groups, allowing these Shi'a militias to rapidly increase their numbers and gain operational flexibility.[233] Many of the groups joining under the Shi'a banner had requesting help from the central government, in some cases for years.[234] By joining with the Shi'a militias, who are well supplied by the IRGC, militias instantly gain access to weapons, training, and other support to begin fighting immediately. This brokerage is occurring outside of areas where the U.S. has a foothold in Iraq, but where the fight against Daesh is still fierce in such places as Tikrit. The large Sunni population in the area presents an inviting opportunity for the U.S. to bring in more tribes to the PMP under its sponsorship rather than Iran's. Group brokerage is shown below in Figure 15.

[233] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 45.

[234] "Baghdad Blamed by MP for Mass Tribal Execution," *Al-Araby Al-Jadeed*, November 1, 2014, http://www.alaraby.co.uk/english/news/5beb68f1-61e8-4a8e-ab12-57217aad1a2a; Haidar Mohammed Ali, "250 Iraqi Sunnis Join Iranian-Backed Shiite Militia to Battle Islamic State," *Global Post*, March 13, 2015, http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/afp/150313/iraqi-sunnis-join-feared-shiite-militia-battle.

Figure 15. Bloc Recruitment of Other Groups by Shi'a Militias



F. SNA CONCLUSION

In summary, analysis of the IDN shows that Iranian influence and power is felt throughout the entire network. At the senior leader and political official level, many pro-Iranian figures hold positions of power or official office, and at the tactical level Iranian resources prove to be tempting for groups looking for support and patronage. Iranian influence is most concentrated within the political and militia subgroups in the IDN, which is reflective of the real life situation in Iraq. In addition, due to the lack of depth in cataloging actors within the Iraqi National Police, there are many possible ties back to Iranian influence due to historic ties with Shi'a political parties supportive of Iran such as the Badr Organization, which currently heads the Ministry of the Interior and coordinates

closely with the PMP that is led by Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis.[235] This places the U.S. at odds with a firmly entrenched Iran regarding the contest of influence within Iraq. To best counter Iran's growing influence, the U.S. needs to identify those actors within the network who are on the periphery of Iran's core support group, that are also in a position of brokerage from which to take action and influence events on their own.

A surprising finding was the discovery of actors such as Ali Dodah al-Jubouri, Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara, and Police Chief Ali al-Jubouri. These actors were all Sunni Arabs who were positively involved with hardline militias. These actors' high centrality and brokerage scores would make them attractive candidates for recruitment, evident by the Shia militias' decision to ally with these groups. A possible for this could have two reasons. First, securing Salahuddin Province is critical to campaign to defeat Daesh, since the province lies between Baghdad and Mosul. Any thrust north will likely take place along Highway 1, which runs straight through Salahuddin Province. For the Shia militia leadership, it makes sense to increase their numbers by recruiting allies among the tribes already fighting Daesh. Second, the recruitment of Sunni Arab allies is a shrewd decision for Iran, because these tribal militias represent an opportunity to increase Iran's sway in Iraqi political circles. The sponsorship of Sunni tribal militias could have positive second order effects by increasing the number of leaders and politicians who view Iran's involvement in the country in a positive and welcoming light.

The recruitment of Jubouri tribes is also an opportunity for the U.S. as well. Outreach, recruitment and support of tribal militias in Salahuddin Province could be a possible starting point to begin pushing back at Iran. The reason for this is the area's operational importance. The U.S. has focused its tribal reconciliation efforts on the Sunni Anbar tribes, yet this effort has yielded little in the way of strategic gains for the U.S. The

[235] Although Falih al-Fayyadh is the titular head of the Popular Mobilization Committee, it is suspected that Muhandis controls the day-to-day operations of the PMP and coordinates between militia groups and the IRGC. For more information, see Liz Sly, "Pro-Iran Militias' Success in Iraq Could Undermine U.S.," *The Washington Post*, February 15, 2015, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/middle_east/iraqs-pro-iranian-shiite-militias-lead-the-war-against-the-islamic-state/2015/02/15/5bbb1cf0-ac94-11e4-8876-460b1144cbc1_story.html; Kirk H. Sowell, "The Rise of Iraq's Militia State"; Bill Roggio, "Iraqi Prime Minister Photographed with SDGT Abu Mahdi Al Muhandis," *The Long War Journal Threat Matrix*, June 13, 2015, http://www.longwarjournal.org/archives/2015/06/iraqi-prime-minister-photographed-with-sdgt-abu-mahdi-al-muhandis.php.

central government in Baghdad, mistrusting of empowering Sunnis, especially in Anbar province, has stalled the idea of creating a legitimized force of Sunni militias. The importance of Salahuddin Province, with its oil refineries in Baiji and strategic avenue of approach running north to Mosul, raises the stakes for Baghdad. Simply put, the central government may need the Sunnis of Salahuddin Province enough to consider empowering them with weapons and support. This in turn creates an opportunity for the U.S. to seize the initiative away from Iran by co-opting the militia fight. In Chapter V, this thesis suggests an approach based off the findings of the analysis of this chapter to assess and recommend a course of action.

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V. A COUNTER-INFLUENCE STRATEGY

Iranian influence is firmly embedded across Iraqi society. Because of this, a strategy that chooses to confront this influence with means such as relying solely on traditional military partnership is unlikely to work well. This situation calls for a bolder, more calculated approach using methods similar to Iran's patronage of social and political groups to wield influence that isolate and bypass Iranian influence, turning Iran's primary strategy into a modern-day Fort Eben Emael.[236] Similarly, the U.S. must adopt a counter-influence approach that exploits Iran's weaknesses in Iraq and the greater Middle East while at the same time leveraging U.S. strengths. This chapter outlines such an approach. It first introduces a new approach to unconventional warfare using SMT as a framework, and then uses this approach to analyze a candidate group, the al-Jubouri tribe of Iraq, to assess its potential for mobilization to counter Iranian influence. As we saw in the last chapter, actors of this tribe scored highly several brokerage and centrality metrics despite being outside of the inner circle of Iranian power. The chapter finally concludes this thesis by presenting overall findings, limitations, and recommendations for further study.

A. THE SMT MODEL AS AN APPROACH TO CONDUCTING UNCONVENTIONAL WARFARE

SMT offers a viable approach to countering Iranian influence in Iraq because of its focus on leveraging indigenous groups and organizations as means to achieving unconventional warfare goals. SMT offers three general advantages: (1) it offers a comprehensive framework on why and how revolutionary movements happen than can help explain how to best leverage existing indigenous movements; (2) it is a well-known tool in the academic world that shows how these movements sustain themselves,

[236] Hitler bypassed Eben Emael's main defenses by employing an innovative technique—glider infantry—to attack the fortress's sole weak point in an asymmetric manner. This operation achieved operational surprise, and had the effect of negating France's defensive strategy. See William H. McRaven, "Chapter 2: The German Attack on Eben Emael, 10 May 1940," in *Spec Ops: Case Studies in Special Operations Warfare: Theory and Practice* (Random House Publishing Group, 1996), 33, https://cle.nps.edu/access/content/group/4bcfcaae-d5cb-49e6-a88c-842b0097705d/Session%206/McRaven_Ch2_Eben_Emael.pdf.

providing valuable TTPs that can aid in the development of a UW campaign plan; and (3), it leverages the goals of existing movements by choosing or co-opting a movement's narratives to become align with U.S. objectives, which gives the U.S. greater legitimacy by embracing local goals over its own outside goals.[237] The focus on already established indigenous movements gives sponsors a greater chance of long-term success in coercing and disrupt targeted states, as opposed to UW operations that focus on raising surrogate forces from scratch to achieve short-term results, usually focusing on tactical-level kinetic effects. A current example of the latter type of operation is the US's train and equip operation in Syria. In contrast to the methodology outlined in Chapter III, the U.S. applied the more traditional approach of creating ad hoc formations consisting of only those individuals who can pass an extensive screening process and then providing these recruits training along with U.S. equipment.[238] While the Syrian campaign's goals differ from those suitable for countering Iranian influence, the difference between a commando-centric strategy and an SMT-based approach suggests that the former to the Iranian problem is unlikely to achieve substantial results.[239]

While solely recruiting fighters will not likely disrupt Iranian influence, neither will randomly selecting already established tribal militias. Considering the strengths of Iran's position in Iraq today, ad hoc sponsorship of groups who lack sufficient political power to fight against Daesh will not automatically reduce the level of Iranian influence in Iraq. As the previous chapter demonstrated, Iran is simply too entrenched, with multiple powerful indigenous groups as its main clients, to be challenged in such a haphazard manner. This is evident in the current emphasis on empowering disenfranchised Sunni groups to build a consensus of unity since the Iraqi central government is unwilling to trust the Anbar Sunni tribes, a mistrust echoed by disaffected

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[237] Doowan Lee and Glenn W. Johnson, "Revisiting the Social Movement Approach," 2–3.

[238] Eric Schmitt and Ben Hubbard, "U.S. Revamping Rebel Force Fighting ISIS in Syria," *The New York Times*, September 6, 2015, http://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/07/world/middleeast/us-to-revamp-training-program-to-fight-isis.html.

[239] The Syrian Train and Equip Program was ended in October 2015 after its efforts to vet, train, and equip Syrian rebels yielded only 54 fighters, most of whom were killed or captured while attempting to re-enter Syria. See Phil Stewart and Kate Holton, "U.S. Pulls Plug on Syria Rebel Training Effort; Will Focus on Weapons Supply," *Reuters*, October 9, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/10/09/us-mideast-crisis-syria-usa-idUSKCN0S31BR20151009.

Anbari leaders. This mutual distrust has already derailed the legacy of the Sunni Awakening movement, when Shia leaders moved quickly to dismantle the Awakening movement after the U.S. withdrawal.[240] Furthermore, Iraq has already protested the US's decision to directly arm and support tribal groups against Daesh, claiming that to arm Arab Sunni and Kurdish militias violates Iraqi sovereignty.[241]

1. Application of the SMT Strategy

To counter Iranian influence, the SMT approach provides a potentially useful strategy. It is more readily aligned with the ultimate objective of a strategy of disrupting Iranian influence within Iraq, as opposed to the regime change strategies of other approaches.[242] Lee and Johnson note that coercion is often more palatable to policy makers than regime change, especially in light of the recent experience in Iraq where an attempt at regime change turned into nation building.[243] The SMT model divides its approach into four lines of operation that will be analyzed here:

1. Deepening broad socio-economic grievances
2. Opening political opportunities by exploiting fractures between elite political groups
3. Enhancing the effectiveness of selected indigenous organizations
4. Expanding strategic narratives[244]

SMT's essential focus is the mobilization of selected groups and begins with the construction of a plan to assess candidate groups and select potential recruits. The assessment of candidate groups follows the four lines of operation mentioned above, using them as a framework to understand the group's ability to successfully mobilize. This section develops an SMT-based strategy that first identifies potential social groups and organizations, analyzes their mobilization potential, and then assesses goals to

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[240] Ahram and Wehrey, "Harnessing Militia Power."

[241] Ibid.

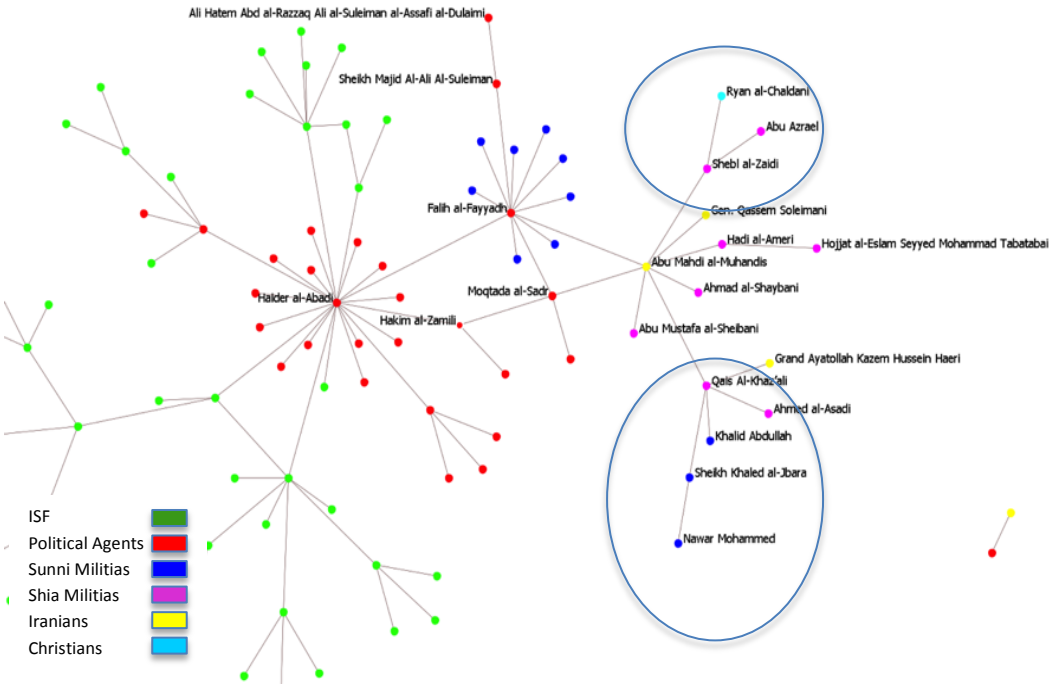
[242] Lee and Johnson, "Revisiting the Social Movement Approach," 4.

[243] Ibid.

[244] Adapted from Doowan Lee and Glenn W. Johnson, "Revisiting the Social Movement Approach."

determine if any group can become aligned with a sponsor's goals.[245] This is accomplished by first analyzing the results of the previous chapter's human domain mapping efforts, using the sociograms such as the one shown in Figure 16 below to identify potential groups, and then exploring the groups' political opportunities, indigenous strengths, and level of "insurgent consciousness."[246] Sociograms can help visualize the structure of the network's social groups by displaying their leadership, connective linkages, and grassroots-level actors and sub-groups.[247]

Figure 16. Bloc Recruitment of Other Groups by Shi'a Militias



By following Iran's pathways of influence determined from the social network analysis, the U.S. can determine an appropriate starting point for its counterstrategy. Analysis of the IDN in Chapter IV demonstrated that at the micro-level, Iran is extending

[245] Ibid., 5.

[246] Lee, "Social Movement Approach to UW," 44–48; McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 40.

[247] Lee, "Social Movement Approach to UW," 30.

its influence throughout Iraq through its outreach and sponsorship of tribal groups via the Shia militias. In Figure 1 above, Shia militias leaders such as Qais al-Khaz'ali recruited tribal groups led by Sheikh Khaled al-Jbara to fight Daesh in the lead up to re-take Tikrit.[248] As Iraq looks to re-take Mosul, towns like al-Sharqat, which is located halfway between Tikrit and Mosul, may became important operational objectives. To press their offensive north, Iran-sponsored groups have also recruited other Sunni tribes from the area with several possible brokers at that level: Mayor Ali Dodah al-Jubouri[249] and Salahuddin Province Deputy Chief of Security Khaled al-Khazraji.[250] These two actors were among several officials with ties to Shia militias that scored in the top 10 for centrality and brokerage in the network. Their position as Sunnis outside of Anbar Province placed them in a tough position between Daesh and the IDN; these actors have been at the forefront of the fight to take back Salahuddin Province, and yet have not received the necessary support from either the U.S. or the central government.

This situation presents an opening for U.S.—to begin outreach, assessment, and recruitment of similar groups under the larger Jubouri tribal federation in Salahuddin Province. In the case of the Jubouri tribe, which is one of the largest in Iraq is and located across the northern central area of the country,[251] the lack of support from Baghdad has been evident since 2013, prompting them to finally accept aid in the form of weapons and support from Iranian-linked militias in villages and towns near Tikrit such as al-Sharqat and al-Alam.[252] These tribal fighters had looked to the central government and the U.S. for support, but were instead forced to ally with Iranian-back Shi'a militias to facilitate

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[248] Haidar Mohammed Ali, "250 Iraqi Sunnis Join Iranian-Backed Shiite Militia to Battle Islamic State."

[249] Deborah Amos, "In Tikrit Offensive, Local Sunnis, Shiite Militias Are Unlikely Allies," News, *NPR Parallels*, (19 MAR 15), http://www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2015/03/19/394099648/in-tikrit-offensive-shiite-militias-form-unlikely-alliance.

[250] "300 Volunteers Finish Training, Ready to Battle ISIS in Salahuddin | The Shia Post," *The Shia Post*, January 14, 2015, http://en.shiapost.com/2015/01/14/300-volunteers-finish-training-ready-to-battle-isis-in-salahuddin/.

[251] Hussein D. Hassan, "Iraq: Tribal Structure, Social, and Political Activities," CRS, CRS Report for Congress (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, March 15, 2007), 5, http://fpc.state.gov/documents/organization/81928.pdf.

[252] Deborah Amos, "In Tikrit Offensive, Local Sunnis, Shiite Militias Are Unlikely Allies"; Haidar Mohammed Ali, "250 Iraqi Sunnis Join Iranian-Backed Shiite Militia to Battle Islamic State."

their battle against Daesh. This development represented an opportunity lost for the U.S. that could have been avoided. With Mosul as the next major Iraqi objective following successful operations in Ramadi, the Jubouri tribe of Salahuddin Province offers an attractive starting point to begin U.S. efforts to disrupt and counter Iranian influence, and is analyzed using the SMT approach below.

B. THE JUBOURI TRIBE

The Jubouris constitute one of the largest tribes in Iraq. Previously a Bedouin tribe, the Jubouris settled across Iraq, and are split between those who worship Sunni Islam in northern Iraq and those who are Shia in the south.[253] The al-Jubouri tribe has traditionally been heavily involved in national-level politics, both as part of the ruling elite and as challengers. The Jubouri tribe also has a long history of resisting oppression—in 1990 Misha'an al-Jubouri, who held a place of high esteem in Saddam Hussein's inner circle, was implicated in a coup attempt.[254] The Jubouri tribe went from occupying a high place of trust within the regime to executing a series of attempts on Hussein's life, described by former U.S. Secretary of State James Baker as some of the most significant ever attempted.[255] Following this, Hussein punished the Jubouri tribe and many of the tribe's members who had occupied high positions of power and patronage by removing them from the regime. Later, during the U.S. occupation of Iraq from 2003–2011, al-Jubouri tribal members fought against al-Qaeda alongside the U.S. as members of the Sahwa ("Awakening") movement.[256] Jubouri leaders at all levels were involved with the Sahwa movement in 2007–2009; however when the Maliki government reneged on its promises to integrate the movement into the federal government and then began persecuting Sahwa leaders.[257] Despite receiving no support from Baghdad, many

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[253] M. Suwaed, *Historical Dictionary of the Bedouins* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2015), 132, https://books.google.com/books?id=P8yhCgAAQBAJ.

[254] Helga Graham, "Saddam's Circles of Hatred," *The Independent*, October 22, 2011, sec. World News, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/saddams-circles-of-hatred-1597074.html.

[255] Ibid.

[256] Amos, "In Tikrit Offensive, Local Sunnis, Shiite Militias Are Unlikely Allies."

[257] Joel Wing, "The Rise And Fall Of The Sons Of Iraq: Interview With Abu Abed," *MUSINGS ON IRAQ*, November 3, 2014, http://musingsoniraq.blogspot.com/2014/11/the-rise-and-fall-of-sons-of-iraq.html.

Jubouris chose to fight when Daesh made its advance east into Iraq. Leaders such as Abu Abir al-Jubouri typify the current attitude concerning the crisis—the tribal leaders do not trust the government, yet are forced to request its assistance to protect their homes.[258]

1. Political Opportunities and the al-Jubouri Tribe

Just as is the case with virtually every other group fighting in Iraq, Daesh's success on the battlefield and the political landscape has created a powerful incentive for the Jubouri tribe to mobilize for collective action. The inability of the Iraqi Security Forces to contain and defeat Daesh created the need for additional forces, resulting in a crisis for Iraq that, in turn, has provided an opportunity for some groups to act, which was reinforced by the fatwa issued by Ayatollah al-Sistani in 2014 calling for Shiites to join Iraq's security forces.[259] Increased legitimization of tribal groups is now building on this. In April of this year, Prime Minister Abadi secured a vote to place the office of the Prime Minister as the commander-in-chief of the PMU, with authorities to lead, control, and organize the mobilization forces.[260] The popular mobilization units having achieved great success against Daesh, Abadi moved to place them more firmly under state control. With the recognition of importance has come critical resources that other tribes can take advantage of.[261] The Abadi administration has allocated $1 billion to the PMP, making it possible for the Jubouri tribes, who were essentially forced to ally with Shia militias with access to equipment and funding[262] a chance to legitimately mobilize. This also creates an opportunity for the U.S. to attack Iran's influence over the program—wielded by senior officials like Muhandis and Ameri—by allowing it to approach the Iraqi government about more directly assisting compatible groups, especially since the U.S.

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[258] Kirk Semple, "Wary Tribal Alliances, Born of Necessity, Offer Hope in Iraq," *The New York Times*, October 6, 2014, http://www.nytimes.com/2014/10/07/world/middleeast/promise-is-seen-in-deals-with-tribes-in-iraqs-battle-against-isis.html.

[259] Matt Schiavenza, "Why Ayatollah Al-Sistani's Iraq Fatwa Is So Important," *International Business Times*, June 13, 2014, http://www.ibtimes.com/why-ayatollah-al-sistanis-iraq-fatwa-so-important-1600926.

[260] "Council of Ministers Decisions in Session 14 in 7/4/2015," *Republic of IRaq General Secretariat for the Council of Ministers*, April 7, 2015, http://cabinet.iq/ArticleShow.aspx?ID=6040.

[261] Renad Mansour, "From Militia to State Force: The Transformation of Al-Hashd Al-Shaabi," *Syria in Crisis*, November 16, 2015, http://carnegieendowment.org/syriaincrisis/?fa=61986.

[262] Deborah Amos, "In Tikrit Offensive, Local Sunnis, Shiite Militias Are Unlikely Allies."

has had issues with the central Iraqi government over providing direct aid without the approval of the central government.[263] Direct support of approved militia groups with equipment, training, and air support may become the best venue for the U.S. to competing against Iran.

2. The Organizational Strength of the al-Jubouri Tribe

The Jubouri tribe's organizational strength lies in its potential ability to convert political opportunities into organized action.[264] Without this conversion potential its ability to conduct in any type of mass action will be "…little more than 'short term, localized, ephemeral outbursts'…"[265] Here the tribe's mobilization potential is analyzed in terms of some of the key resources identified by McAdam: group membership and solidary incentives.

Group membership within the Jubouri tribal structure is plentiful, with the primary membership consisting of the tribe members themselves. While the incentive to defend their homeland is a powerful incentive for the Jubouri tribe, its greatest strength is its political organization. The Jubouri tribe's strong, geographically focused organization promotes the Jubouris over other tribal confederations like the Dulaym tribes of Anbar Province, which are spread out across Iraq and other countries. The Dulaym tribal confederation has also suffered from its confrontation with the Maliki government over promised support of the Sahwa program. What separates the Jubouris from the Dulaym tribal leadership in this matter is that the central government and the Anbar sheikhs were unable to come to a resolution. The crackdown on protests in 2013[266] resulted in the Dulaymi sheikhs forming the Anbar Tribal Revolutionary Council, which pledged to protect Anbar Sunnis from the government, which only increased the central government's distrust of the Anbar Sheikhs. The Jubouris, on the other hand, did not

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[263] Landon Shroder, "The Only Thing Iraq's Sunnis and Shias Hate More Than Each Other Is the Islamic State," *VICE News*, May 21, 2015, https://news.vice.com/article/the-only-thing-iraqs-sunnis-and-shias-hate-more-than-each-other-is-the-islamic-state.

[264] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 44.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Sowell, "Maliki's Anbar Blunder."

confront the government, and today hold office at several levels within the Iraqi government ranging from the mayor of al-Sharqat village Ali Dodah al-Jabouri to the Speaker of the Iraqi Parliament, Dr. Salim Abdullah al-Jubouri.[267] The Jubouri tribal history of heavy involvement in politics has likely resulted in a culture that values activism and makes key leaders more open to recruitment. The fact that many tribal leaders—not just those in the Jubouri tribe—are upset by the lack of U.S. involvement and support,[268] may present the U.S. an opportunity to lure groups away from Iranian-backed militias and recruit unaffiliated groups by offering enticements greater than those offered by Iran.

The Jubouri tribe's organizational structure lends itself to the bloc recruitment of smaller groups within the greater tribe. As noted in the previous chapter, bloc recruitment is the recruitment of complete organizations rather than single individuals.[269] One method to utilize this type of recruitment would be reaching out to upper-level officials within Salahuddin province—where the Jubouris hold senior positions in the offices of the governor, security councils—as well as to smaller villages and towns. Successfully recruiting fighters and commanders from smaller villages would lessen the difficulties that U.S. trainers face with ad hoc units by ensuring that fighters are vetted by their leaders and thus allowing the U.S. to accept more risk regarding the fighters' reliability. This could reduce the time needed by the U.S. to train and fully mobilize new fighter units and build combat power up more quickly.

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[267] "Iraq Parliament Elects Salim Jabouri as Speaker," News, *Al Arabiya*, (July 15, 2014), http://ara.tv/jxmsb.

[268] The arc of diminished support from the central government started in 2008–09 with the dismantling of the Sahwa Movement by Maliki following the U.S. withdrawal. Following this, the U.S. complicity in allowing Maliki a second term combined with the lack of support by the U.S. during the struggle against Daesh has left many former Sunni allies bitter over the US's involvement. See Philip "PJ" Dermer, "The 'Sons of Iraq,' Abandoned by Their American Allies," *Wall Street Journal*, July 1, 2014, sec. Opinion, http://www.wsj.com/articles/philip-dermer-the-sons-of-iraq-abandoned-by-their-american-allies-1404253303; Emma Sky, "How Obama Abandoned Democracy in Iraq," *POLITICO Magazine*, April 7, 2015, http://www.politico.com/magazine/story/2015/04/obama-iraq-116708.html; Filkins, "What We Left Behind"; Deborah Amos, "In Tikrit Offensive, Local Sunnis, Shiite Militias Are Unlikely Allies."

[269] McAdam, "Chapter 3: The Political Process Model," 45.

3. Jubouri Cognitive Liberation

Properly framing a narrative that enables the Jubouri tribe to accept U.S. sponsorship and mobilize its fighters will present some challenges. The U.S. will need to deal with the general feelings of mistrust towards both the U.S. and the Iraqi central government that currently exists in the minds of tribe members.[270] The U.S. also needs to build a convincing enough case for sheiks to overcome any fears of retaliation[271] by Daesh and provide some credible evidence or plan that the central government is working to support the tribe with salaries, weapons and training. Unfortunately, while the effort to integrate tribes from Anbar province seems to be making progress, there still exist inadequacies in the central government's ability to pay the tribal fighters it has recruited.[272] Ironically, the Jubouri tribe should need little convincing of the need to mobilize—it has been fighting Daesh in Salahuddin province since 2013 and some villages have been repeatedly punished for trying to overthrow their Daesh conquerors.[273] However, the prognostic frame needs to blend Jubouri concerns for the future, namely integration and support of its fighters by the central government, into a suitable motivational frame in order to provide the groups a reason to join together.[274] One way this can be accomplished is for the Iraqi government to simply improve the mechanisms for supporting militia groups. To assist with this, it is imperative that the U.S. press forward with efforts to reconcile Sunni tribes with the Shia government. This

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[270] Semple, "Wary Tribal Alliances, Born of Necessity, Offer Hope in Iraq."

[271] Euphrates News, "Daash Force 7 of the Tribal Leaders Jabour Enter into Metal Cages for Refusing Allegiance in Sharqat," *Al Forat News*, September 4, 2015, http://translate.googleusercontent.com/translate_c?depth=2&hl=en&prev=search&rurl=translate.google.com&sl=ar&u=http://alforatnews.com/modules/news/article.php%3Fstoryid%3D94228&usg=ALkJrhhZaKna-YYznG8X8CuRm1Y1tjMl4Q.

[272] Jane Arraf, "Anbar Awakens With a New Bedfellow," *Foreign Policy: Dispatch*, May 7, 2015, https://foreignpolicy.com/2015/05/07/anbar-awakens-with-a-new-bedfellow/.

[273] Erin Cunningham, "In Iraq, Islamic State Fighters Seize Sunni Tribesmen for Resisting Rule," *The Washington Post*, November 6, 2014, https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/in-iraq-islamic-state-fighters-seize-sunni-tribesmen-for-resisting-rule/2014/11/06/74069916-6382-11e4-ab86-46000e1d0035_story.html; Euphrates News, "Daash Force 7 of the Tribal Leaders Jabour Enter into Metal Cages for Refusing Allegiance in Sharqat."

[274] Lee describes strategic framing as "the conscious strategic efforts by groups of people to fashion shared understanding of the world and of themselves that legitimize and motivate collective action. A good insurgent narrative has three core frames: diagnostic, prognostic and motivational." See Lee, "Social Movement Approach to UW," 30.

goes beyond simply enrolling tribes into a national guard, and deals more with reestablishing trust between the government and the governed.[275] The larger issue with arming Sunni militias in today's Iraq is one of trust. Neither the central government nor the armed group can trust each other, and what results is seen today where Jubouri tribal leaders need weapons but don't trust the government, and efforts to formally integrate these groups is resisted in the Iraqi Council of Representatives.[276] Building a narrative frame around trust and reconciliation, then, becomes the highest priority to frame the debate over mobilization.

A second framing narrative that should be introduced is that Iranian-backed Shia militias will only cause more problems than they solve. An example of this would be the reports of Shia militias looting stores and destroying homes in the wake of the liberation of Tikrit.[277] Diagnostic framing themes to support this narrative could include anger over the forced displacement of Sunni families from areas liberated by Shia militias by ransacking homes, businesses, and mosques.[278] No convincing of the veracity of these allegations needs to take place as the events are well documented. To fix this it should be made clear that non-Iranian sponsored forces are required to defeat Daesh and properly re-establish stability. It should also be emphasized that those who join with the ISF or US-back militias get better training, equipment, and partnership than they could expect from Iran. The U.S. can point the recent example of Tikrit to show that without the US's air power, which is only given to "official" Iraqi forces, i.e., those not backed by Iran, any planned offensive will ultimately stall and be costly in terms of lives lost.

Through analyzing the opportunities, strengths, and possible framing narratives, the political process model shows that the Jubouri tribe is a potential candidate for U.S. support. Assisting the Jubouri in accomplishing its goal of defending its homeland and

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[275] Ahram and Frederic Wehrey, "Harnessing Militia Power."

[276] Ibid.

[277] "Special Report: After Iraqi Forces Take Tikrit, a Wave of Looting and Lynching," *Reuters*, April 3, 2015, http://www.reuters.com/article/2015/04/03/us-mideast-crisis-iraq-tikrit-special-re-idUSKBN0MU1DP20150403.

[278] Tirana Hassan and Erin Evers, "After Liberation Came Destruction: Iraqi Militias and the Aftermath of Amerli" (Washington, DC: Human Rights Watch, 2015), 2, http://features.hrw.org/features/HRW_2015_reports/Iraq_Amerli/index.html.

becoming more supported by the central government in Baghdad could also facilitate a counter-influence strategy against Iran, which depends on its militias to exert political influence within the country. The U.S. faces a dilemma regarding its strategy to counter Iranian influence. The simplest answer involves a large troop commitment in Iraq (as well as Syria), however that option is politically infeasible. Worse, the IRGC through its Quds Force has successfully been able to leverage the powerful Shia militias to keep the Iraqi government under its influence and has caused numerous U.S. casualties during its occupation there from 2003 to 2011.

None of this is to suggest that Iran is omnipotent, however. The IRGC's facilitation of Maliki's sectarian agenda partially created the conditions that allowed Daesh to rapidly seize large swaths of Iraqi territory, a crucial miscalculation that has drawn the IRGC back into Iraq to contain the threat to its own borders. Iran took advantage of the situation by co-opting the recently created Popular Mobilization Committee; however, the recent offensive in Tikrit has revealed the limits of Iranian power. Without U.S. air support, the offensive ground to a halt and the militias suffered heavy casualties before being ordered to pull back by Prime Minister Abadi in order to meet the conditions of U.S. participation in the offensive. That the offensive resumed speaks volumes about the desperate situation the Iraqi leadership is in; they are willing to risk angering one of their main partners and powerful surrogates in order to win. This moment also represents an opportunity of huge potential for the U.S. as well—not every militia pulled out in protest, signaling that some are comfortable with U.S. involvement. With the proper approach, this opportunity can be seized and allow the U.S. to take a significant step towards disrupting the IRGC's hold on Iraq.

If Iran's center of gravity in Iraq is the power it wields through its surrogates, then only a strategy that attacks that source of power can counter it. This is what makes the SMT approach such a viable strategy to disrupt Iran's influence. Through its emphasis on working through already established groups that can wield political power, an SMT approach directly challenges Iran's hold on Iraq by recruiting more groups to the US's cause and disrupting and reducing the amount of political power held by Iranian-backed political groups.

C. CONCLUSION

1. Overall Findings

This study has traced the pathways of Iranian influence in Iraq, starting from its roots through today. Beginning with the Iran-Iraq War in 1980, Iran has made sponsorship of oppositional parties the centerpiece of its campaign to achieve its strategic goals in Iraq. Chapter III of this thesis showed, through the SMT framework of McAdam's political process model, how Iran took advantage of a shared religious heritage and converging goals to successfully co-opt the Islamic Da'wa Party, sponsoring their efforts to fight against Saddam Hussein. Later, when the Da'wa Party's goals diverged from Iran's doctrine of *vilayat-e faqih*,[279] Iran was able to pull members away from the Da'wa Party to create the SCIRI. These two groups have since been employed by Iran as the main avenue of its influence. Later, during the U.S. occupation of Iraq from 2003–2011, Iran used these groups to facilitate the establishment of a Shia government led by Da'wa Party leader Nouri al-Maliki, whose has been supported since 2005 by Qassem Soleimani of the Quds force. In addition to manipulating the politics of the country, Iran conducted a sophisticated asymmetric warfare campaign against the U.S. led by such agents as Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, which culminated in the successful prevention of a security agreement that forced the U.S. to leave the country. Now that Iraq is in crisis again following the invasion of Daesh, Iran is closer than ever to achieving a permanent client state in Iraq with the legitimization of its sponsored Shia militias, reminiscent of the Hezbollahization of Lebanon.

The pathways of Iranian influence were also traced using the personal network developed and maintained by the IRGC. Chapter IV analyzed this by mapping the network of actors within Iraq focused on combatting Daesh. As expected, the Shia militia leadership was found to be highly central within the network. Politicians and militia leaders such as Hadi al-Ameri and Qais al-Khaz'ali scored higher in brokerage measures than non-Shia politicians, indicative of the power held by this faction within Iraq. Micro-level brokerage was explored to understand the mechanics of how Iran is able to extend

[279] In Farsi, "Guardianship of the Jurist"

its reach, and found that the Shia militias were conducting bloc recruitment of Sunni and Christian militias in areas like Salahuddin Province that are operationally vital to the campaign to eliminate Daesh. SNA was critical to the understanding of that led to the discovery of tribes such as those under the al-Jubouri tribal confederation as a possible means to counter Iranian influence within the network because of SNA's ability to place actors within the network according to their importance. Sunni tribal leaders outside of the Jubouri, while having roughly the same types and number of ties, were found to be of less importance. This is significant because of the U.S. experience in Iraq, which focused so heavily on Anbar tribes for support that today lack the geographic and social potential to impact Iranian influence that Jubouri tribes have.

The exploration of micro-level brokerage provided insight into ways to possibly disrupt and counter this influence. Noting the bloc recruitment occurring among tribal groups that were non-Shia, this study analyzed a candidate group that could be mobilized and leveraged by the U.S. to counter Iranian influence. Using the SMT approach to UW developed by Lee, Chapter V analyzed the al-Jubouri tribe at large to understand its mobilization potential, finding that this tribe held unique political opportunities created by the rise of Daesh and the government's need for militia support, and was organized in sufficient strength that with proper narrative framing by the US, this group could serve as a potential counterweight to Iran's influence. Similar to SNA, SMT was also highly important to properly assess candidate social groups for the creation of a counter-Iranian influence strategy. The factors used to understand Iran's success in sponsoring the Islamic Da'wa and SCIRI were also the key to evaluating the Jubouri potential for mobilization. SMT allowed for an understanding of not only the Jubouri tribe's key strengths but also its ability to act and its unifying narratives, without which would give only a partial view of the tribe's suitability for U.S. support. Without the use of SMT, the U.S. risks sponsoring groups that are unable to convert similar opportunities into action, or lack the internal organization to sustain desired effects.

2. Limitations

This study was limited by two factors. The use SNA to understand a network requires that data available to record and study relationships. However, the major source of information for this study, open source news media reports, generally contained limited amounts of relational data. Therefore, this study was unable to assume that all information pertaining to its network was available and correct. While the news reports referenced were generally accurate, this accuracy was not consistent, and was often biased based on the views of the particular organization reporting it. Finally, some relational ties were inferred using the author's subjective experience. While usually ties like organizational and affiliation ties were considered straightforward, ties involving trust or mutual respect and affection were often inferred, and are subject to the author's own bias. To mitigate these limitations, the author cross-referenced the relational ties using multiple sources, and discriminated amongst the source material to maximize the use of reporting from established, reputable news organizations and minimized the use uncreditable sources like social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter.

3. Recommendations for Further Study

To further support this strategy, additional social network analysis is recommended in two key networks: the al-Jubouri tribal network in Salahuddin province and the Iraqi National Police leadership. The former is recommended in order to further illuminate the network of potential allies for the campaign to re-take Mosul. The latter is recommended in order to cast more light on the extent of Iranian influence throughout the Iraqi government. The Ministry of the Interior will likely remain a haven for Shia political organizations with strong ties to Iran. In the past this ministry was used to legitimize Shia sectarian killings of Sunnis, and it will likely remain susceptible to Iran's influence in the future. For example, if Iran were to suddenly find its influence diminished within the Popular Mobilization Units, it would most likely find support in the upper ranks of the Ministry of the Interior. By mapping the human terrain within Iraq, the U.S. will be better equipped to detect such shifts in political influence, and will be able to act accordingly. The synthesis of SNA and SMT with unconventional warfare can

further our understanding of the environment in the Middle East and will enable the creation of a long-term vision that will lead to more stable and productive results in the future.

APPENDIX. PROJECT CODEBOOK

The project codebook was designed by Associate Professor Dan Cunningham, CORE Lab, Defense Analysis Department, as part of this study's project team.

A. RELATIONSHIPS

1. AFFILIATED INDIVIDUALS IN SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY (person-to-person) –Two or more individuals who receive formal education, serve as an employee (teacher, admin, etc.) and/or are involved in additional educational instruction at the same institution and at the same time.

2. AFFILIATED ORGANIZATIONS IN SCHOOL/UNIVERSITY (person-to-organization) – Defined as a relationship between an individual and an educational institution where the individual attends, works at (teacher, admin, etc.), or receives additional educational instruction at the institution.

3. BUSINESS AFFILIATIONS (person-to-organization) – Defined as an individual's employment at or ownership of a profit and/or non-profit commercial organization.

4. BUSINESS PARTNERS (person-to-person) – Defined as two or more individuals who have direct financial and commercial interests with one another outside of marriage.

5. COLLEAGUES (person-to-person) – Defined as two or more individuals who work directly with one another, but who do not necessarily have direct financial interests with one another.

6. COMMUNICATION (person-to-person) – Defined as the relaying of messages between individuals inside the network through some sort of medium, such as a cellular telephone or email.

7. EVENTS (person-to-event) – Defined as a person's participation in a political event, meeting or operation. Please record the event's date, a two-to-three word description and the location if possible. For example, Dan participated in a political event titled "1/15/14_CORE Lab Meeting_Monterey, CA."

8. GOVERNMENT AFFILIATION (person-to-organization) – Defined as an individual's employment or allegiance to a specific government body. This option does NOT include military or educational government bodies (See Military Affiliation and Affiliated Organizations in

School/University). Please be as specific as possible (i.e., Booze Allen Hamilton's Research Office as oppose to Booze Allen Hamilton).

9. KINSHIP (person-to-person) - Kinship is defined as any family connection through blood or marriage. Examples include, but are not limited to, children, parents, siblings, mother and father-in-laws, uncles, aunts, and grandparents.

10. MENTORSHIP (person-to-person) –Defined as a relationship where an individual looks to another individual for educational, spiritual and/or technical advice, guidance and/or expertise.

11. MILITARY AFFILIATION (person-to-organization) – A relationship where an individual is employed by a specific military organization. Please be as specific as possible (i.e. Naval Postgraduate School's CORE Lab as oppose to Naval Postgraduate School).

12. NONPOLITICAL AFFILIATIONS (person-to-organization) – An individual's employment or allegiance to a specific organization that fits neither the criteria of a political organization nor any other type listed in the dossier (i.e., academic, commercial organization, military, political and government).

13. POLITICAL ALLIES (person-to-person) – An individual's close and explicit political alliance with another individual to include joint-campaigns, political statements claiming support, etc.

14. POLITICAL MOVEMENTS AFFILIATION (person-to-organization) – An individual's membership and/or direct support to a group that seeks to obtain political goals generally through non-violent means, including political parties.

15. RELIGIOUS AFFILIATIONS (person-to-organization) – Religious relations are defined as an individual's membership or allegiance to a specific mosque, church, synagogue or religious study circle.

16. SUPERIOR-SUBORDINATE (person-to-person) – Defined as relationships between immediate superiors and subordinates in a network. This relationship is essentially a "Reports to" relationship and is meant to account for formal/hierarchical ties within a network. Please record the "superior" actor in the "Superior-Subordinate" column.

17. TERRORIST ORGANIZATION AFFILIATION (person-to-organization) – Defined as an individual's membership in an organization that uses violence against a civil population to cause fear for the purpose of bringing about political change.

18. TRIBAL AFFILIATION (person-to-organization) – Defined as an individual's membership or claim to be a member of a tribe or ethnic group.

19. TRUST (person-to-person) – Defined as two individuals who are explicitly stated as friends or who are explicitly known as trusted associates.

20. MISCELLANEOUS (person-to-person) - Defined as relationship between two individuals that does not fall within the definition of any other option listed in the code book.

B. ATTRIBUTES

1. ALSO KNOWN AS – An alternative by which the individuals is known. Coding Scheme (list the full alternative name)

2. ARREST/INCARCERATION/EXILE RECORDS – An individual's arrest and/or exile history.

(a) Arrest/Incarceration History
(b) Arrested/Incarcerated – The individual is currently under arrest or incarcerated.

3. EXILE HISTORY – The individual was in exile in the past.

(a) Exiled – The individual is currently in exile from their home country.
(b) Exile and Arrest/Incarceration History – The actor has been both exiled and arrested in the past. Please add the specific dates in the "Notes" column of the Excel workbook provided to you in class.

4. CITIZENSHIP – Defined as the country in which an individual was born and/or claims citizenship status

5. EDUCATION – Defined as the highest degree of education attained by the individual.

(a) Less than High School
(b) High School
(c) University
(d) Graduate (Masters)
(e) Graduate (PhD)

6. ETHNICITY – An actor's ethnic group.

7. LANGUAGES – The language (s) an individual speaks, reads and/or writes.

8. LOCATION (CURRENT) – An individual's current place of residence. Please include the most micro location as possible; for example, list "Monterey, California, United States" as oppose to "California."

9. LOCATION (PAST) – An individual's former place of residence. Please include the most micro location as possible; for example, list "Monterey, California, United States" as oppose to "California."

10. MILITARY SERVICE – An individual's military service history.

11. OCCUPATION - Defined as an individual's current functional title of employment. Coding Scheme (list the specific occupation (i.e. Plumber))

12. POLITICAL POSITIONS (CURRENT) – Any current political office positions held by an individual.

13. POLITICAL POSITIONS (PAST) – Any current political office positions held by an individual in the past and that he or she no longer holds.

14. POLITICAL AFFILIATIONS CONSISTENCY – Defined as the motivations for political support and activism, including monetary, ideology, coercion, ego, family, tribe, ethnic, and personal loyalty. The coding schemes for a-c contain the same options. Note you can list multiple motivations separated by a comma (i.e., monetary, ego, family).

15. POLITICAL SPEECHES AND STATEMENTS – Important political speeches made by an individual. Political speeches are defined as those where the main theme is political in nature.

16. RELIGION – Defined as the actor's specific religion (please include the most specific religion as possible).

17. STATUS – Defined as the physical condition of the individual. The default is "alive" if there is a lack of information. Add any additional information (i.e. "Abu was shot and surrendered to the police") to the notes section. Coding Scale: (leave blank for "alive")

(a) Deceased
(b) Suspected Deceased
(c) Detained (jailed, arrested)

18. TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONAL ROLE – Defined as the role an individual assumes in the terrorist/insurgent network. Of course, coding several roles is permitted given most actors hold more than one role.

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