

closed-mindedness. According to discussants in Benghazi, the term is associated with having darker skin and being lower class, which introduces a racial element as well. As one participant stated, “It is said to demean and connotes a lower level of sophistication, as if somehow the western parts of Libya hold all [of] the culture and traditions.”

Why it’s offensive and inflammatory: This phrase discriminates based on regional origins and may be used by people from the western regions to insult and demean people from the east while emphasizing regional division and discord within Libya. The connotation of the term is that people in the east are not authentic Libyans and they are “second class citizens.” This term is inflammatory because it is perceived as weakening the Libyan identity by adding another layer of fragmentation on top of tribalism and communalism.

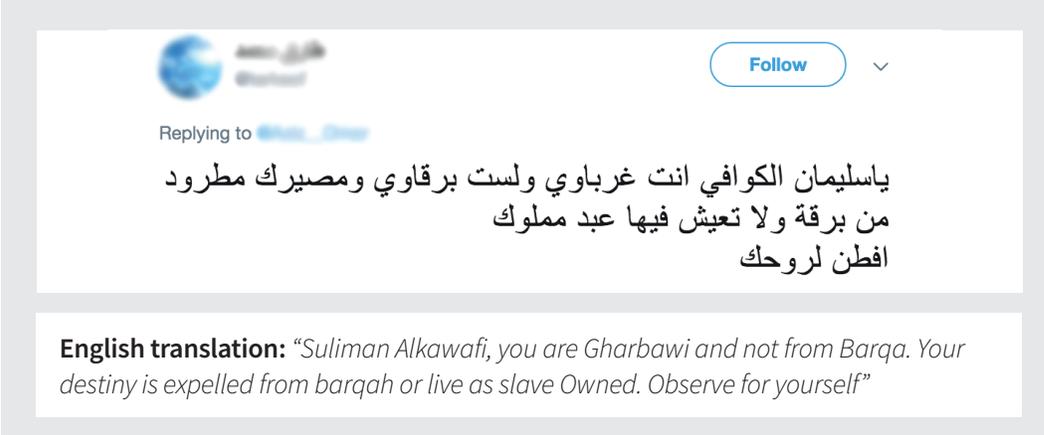
The offensiveness of this term is closely related to the historical context of regional relations and development. Benghazi and other parts of the eastern region of Libya faced underdevelopment and neglect under Gaddafi and it is likely that this contributed to the negative stereotypes assigned to people from the east through the use of the term “shargawe.” Some participants in the Tripoli focus group noted that “regional racism” increased under Gaddafi due to his exclusionary practices. The origins of this regionalism go back much further, however, likely dating back to when Libya was separated into the three administrative regions of Tripolitania in the northwest, Fezzan in the southwest, and Cyrenaica in the east during the Ottoman Empire. There are several other hateful regionalist terms, including the related references listed above and the following term for “western,” that are illustrative of the overall problem of regional-based stereotyping and discrimination in Libya.

Non-offensive alternative terms: لبيبي / *Libyan*

8. غرباوي / *Gharbawi (Western)*

Other spellings and related references: بريوش / *baryoosh* (English translation: *croissant, i.e., soft because of what they eat*); عسل / *asleen* (English translation: *honey, i.e., softie*); *Tunisian*; سحنون / *sahnun* (English translation: *too soft / pushover*); مركزية / *markazi* (English translation: *centralized*); غرباوي / *gharbi*; غرب / *gharb*; غرنيش / *gharenbish* (English translation: *from the west*); غرابية / *gharaba* (English translation: *westerners*)

Sample Posts:



The screenshot shows a social media post from a user with a blue profile picture. The post is a reply to another user. The text of the post is in Arabic and contains a derogatory reference to the 'Gharbawi' region. Below the screenshot, an English translation is provided.

English translation: “Suliman Alkawafi, you are Gharbawi and not from Barqa. Your destiny is expelled from barqah or live as slave Owned. Observe for yourself”