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THESIS

RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTERS TO TUNISIA AND LIBYA AFTER THE CONFLICT IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

by

Zachary C. Kimble

December 2018

Thesis Advisor:	Doowan Lee
Co-Advisor:	Sean F. Everton

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13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words)

Many of the fighters who traveled from their home states in Africa and Europe have begun to return as the Islamic State (IS) has lost control over much of the territory it seized in Iraq and Syria. These returnees are not only fighters; they are also family members or individuals who supported the organization indirectly. As estimated by Richard Barrett in *Beyond the Caliphate*, a minimum of 5,600 individuals have returned home to 33 countries around the world as of October 2017. Some of them have chosen to return to under-governed states rather than their nation of origin to connect with and gain support from Salafi-Jihadist networks or to escape punishment in their home states that have implemented strict policies of judicial punishment for IS and its supporters. Returnees are perceived as a significant threat both due to their battlefield experience and their ability to strengthen existing networks and to increase convergence of disconnected or loosely connected networks in the region. This thesis examines governments, political parties, and extremist organizations via case study and network analysis to highlight which groups are most likely to receive returning fighters and to determine if their policies are likely to strengthen or weaken their ties to extremism upon their return.

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RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTERS TO TUNISIA AND LIBYA AFTER THE
CONFLICT IN IRAQ AND SYRIA

Zachary C. Kimble
Major, United States Army
BA, The Citadel, 2004
MA, Webster College, 2011

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NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL
December 2018

Approved by: Doowan Lee
                Advisor

                Sean F. Everton
                Co-Advisor

                John J. Arquilla
                Chair, Department of Defense Analysis

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ABSTRACT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AQIM	Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb
ASL	Ansar al-Sharia in Libya
AST	Ansar al-Sharia in Tunisia
BRSC	Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council
CBL	Central Bank of Libya
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
GNA	Government of National Accord
GNC	General National Congress
HCS	High Council of State
HoR	House of Representatives
HT	Hizb al Tahrir
IS	Islamic State
ISIS	Islamic State of Iraq and Syria
JI	Jabhat al Islah
LIFG	Libyan Islamic Fighting Group
LNA	Libyan National Army
LPA	Libyan Political Agreement
NOC	National Oil Company
NSA	Non-state actor
NTC	National Transitional Council
PC	Presidential Council
RT	Russia Today
UN	United Nations

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I. INTRODUCTION

Many of the fighters who traveled from their home states in Africa and Europe have begun to return as the Islamic State (IS) has lost control over much the territory it seized territory in Iraq and Syria. The amount of territory held by the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) and its immediate predecessors peaked in 2015 and has been contracting regularly since that time. These returnees are not only fighters but also include families or individuals who supported the organization indirectly. An estimated minimum of 5,600 individuals have returned home to 33 countries around the world as of October 2017.[1] Some of these may choose to return to under-governed states different than their nation of origin to connect with and gain support from Salafi-Jihadist or criminal networks or merely as a means to escape punishment in their home states who have implemented strict policies of judicial punishment for IS and its supporters.

Returnees are perceived as a significant threat due to both their battlefield experience and their ability to both strengthen existing networks and to increase convergence of disconnected or loosely connected networks in the region.[2] These networks were used to facilitate travel to Iraq and Syria, often via Libya and Turkey, and were likely strengthened and expanded upon during the conflict itself. It is reasonable to expect that some portion of returnees will use the same connections and relationships to aid their movement as the situation worsens in Iraq and Syria and the situation becomes untenable. Studies have shown that while not all, or even the majority, of returning foreign fighters will attempt either

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[1] Richard Barrett, *Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees* (New York: The Soufan Center, 2017), 5, http://thesoufancenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Beyond-the-Caliphate-Foreign-Fighters-and-the-Threat-of-Returnees-TSC-Report-October-2017-v3.pdf.

[2] Alastair Reed and Johanna Pohl, "Tackling the Surge of Returning Foreign Fighters," *NATO Review*, July 14, 2017, https://www.nato.int/docu/review/2017/Also-in-2017/daesh-tackling-surge-returning-foreign-fighters-prevention-denmark-rehabilitation-programmes/EN/index.htm.

domestic or transnational attacks, those plots that do involve veteran fighters are both more likely to succeed and more likely to result in deaths.[3]

Thomas Hegghammer studied jihadis who returned between 1980 and 2010, and found that the rate of those who returned to their home states with the intent to conduct domestic terror attacks was approximately 1 in 9.[4] These estimates were from a pre-IS era and may not accurately predict the motivations of current IS returnees or the strength of their existing networks. Additionally, these data focused on returnees in Europe and the United States and may not serve as an accurate predictor of current returnees' future behavior in under-governed or fragile states. Even those returnees who lack the intent to conduct attacks upon their return will still likely pass through some form of state and judicial processing in more governed states and thus make themselves known to state security and intelligence services. However, even those with no intent to conduct attacks could pose a threat as previously unconnected or loosely connected extremist and criminal networks converge with those at the local and regional level. Returning foreign fighters may also converge with and rely upon existing networks at home comprised of those individuals who hold extremist views but did not make the journey to fight or were intercepted at some point in their travels and returned home.

Dr. David Malet proposes that there is a "dark window" of five months beginning on the return of a foreign fighter. This dark window is the time in which returnees are most at risk of becoming domestic terrorists, and then the threat declines sharply.[5] It remains to be seen if these estimates hold true with the return of IS fighters to North Africa and as well as the potential for attacks outside of the state but headquartered out of hubs of extremism like Libya. Malet acknowledges that his data primarily focused on returnees in North America and Europe in highly governed spaces and thus the conclusions reached would only serve as a

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[3] Thomas Hegghammer, "Should I Stay or Should I Go? Explaining Variation in Western Jihadists' Choice between Domestic and Foreign Fighting," *American Political Science Review* 107, no. 1 (February 2013): 11–13, https://doi.org/10.1017/S0003055412000615.

[4] Hegghammer, 7.

[5] David Malet and Rachel Hayes, "Foreign Fighter Returnees: An Indefinite Threat?," *Terrorism and Political Violence*, 2018, 3–5, https://doi.org/10.1080/09546553.2018.1497987.

starting point for research aimed at countries like Tunisia and Libya with their own unique challenges and environments.[6]

A.   SCOPE

To illuminate and map key political organizations and jihadist networks that could potentially receive returning fighters, their families, and their supporters as they reestablish themselves in Northern Africa with special emphasis on Tunisia and Libya.

B.   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What are the key organizations and movements in Libya and Tunisia that facilitate the "returning faithful" following significant physical losses of territory in Iraq and Syria?

- Which policies and practices by these organizations are likely to strengthen or weaken radicalization and commitment to violence as foreign fighters as their families return to Tunisia or Libya?

C.   FOCUS ON TUNISIA AND LIBYA

Tunisia and Libya were the focus of this thesis due to the unique circumstances that led to so many of their citizens making the choice to travel and support IS as well as the current environments in both countries that returnees will face upon their return. Tunisia outpaced all other countries in the most recent wave of foreign fighters. Libya, while itself a significant source of fighters, currently serves as an attractive destination for returnees of all nationalities due to the internal conflict, lack of governance and strength of extremist and criminal networks. David Sterman and Nate Rosenblatt highlight how Tunisia and Libya far outpaced their neighbors in North Africa in the supply of foreign fighters when current estimates are examined per capita as drawn from the provincial Sunni populations.[7] The originating

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[6] Malet and Hayes, "Foreign Fighter Returnees: An Indefinite Threat?"

[7] David Sterman and Nate Rosenblatt, *All Jihad Is Local: Volume II :ISIS in North Africa and the Arabian Peninsula* (Washington, DC: New America, 2018), 17, https://www.newamerica.org/international-security/policy-papers/all-jihad-local-volume-ii/.

provinces of foreign fighters in Table 1 provide clear examples of the contrast between the
number of fighters originating from Tunisia and Libya when compared to their neighbors.

Table 1.   Top 20 Provinces' Sources of Foreign Fighters[8]

Rank	Province	Country	ISIS Fighters from Province (min 10)	Province Population	Percent of Population that is Sunni Muslim	Fighters per 100,000 Sunni Residents
1	Derna	(Libya)	34	163,351	97%	21.5
2	Kebili	(Tunisia)	27	156,961	99%	17.4
3	Tunis	(Tunisia)	136	1,056,247	99%	13
4	Bizerte	(Tunisia)	58	568,219	99%	10.3
5	Sidi Bouzid	(Tunisia)	35	429,912	99%	8.2
-	Grand Tunis	(Tunisia)	211	2,643,695	99%	8.1
6	Ariana	(Tunisia)	41	576,088	99%	7.2
7	Benghazi	(Libya)	47	670,791	97%	7.2
8	Tataouine	(Tunisia)	10	149,453	99%	6.8
9	Monasir	(Tunisia)	34	548,828	99%	6.3
10	Medenine	(Tunisia)	29	479,520	99%	6.1
11	Sousse	(Tunisia)	39	674,971	99%	5.8
12	Kasserine	(Tunisia)	25	439,243	99%	5.7
13	Kairouan	(Tunisia)	28	570,559	99%	5
14	Manouba	(Tunisia)	17	379,518	99%	4.5
15	Gabès	(Tunisia)	13	374,300	99%	3.5
16	Nabeul	(Tunisia)	27	787,920	99%	3.5
17	Gafsa	(Tunisia)	11	337,331	99%	3.3
18	Ben Arous	(Tunisia)	17	631,842	99%	2.7
19	Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima	(Morocco)	85	3,556,729	99%	2.4
20	Fès-Meknès	(Morocco)	50	4,236,892	99%	1.2

The Moroccan province of Tanger-Tétouan-Al Hoceima is the first to make an
appearance at #19 when compared to the neighboring Tunisian and Libya provinces. While

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8 Source: Sterman and Rosenblatt, 17.

Tunisia led the world on a per capita basis in foreign fighters departing, Libya holds a unique role as both a source of fighters and a likely destination for returnees of all nations who may be unwilling or unable to return to the nations of origin. It is also likely to serve as a hub for those fighters intending to carry on fighting in other conflicts due to the lack of governance and low probability of stability in the immediate future.

D.   WHO ARE THE FOREIGN FIGHTERS?

While exact definitions vary, the UN Security Council defines them as "individuals who travel to a State other than their States of residence or nationality for the purpose of the perpetration, planning, or preparation of, or participation in, terrorist acts or the providing or receiving of terrorist training, including in connection with armed conflict."[9] This definition is exceptionally state-centric in a world with an ever-increasing role of the non-state actor (NSA).

The current unclassified estimate is that approximately 40,000 fighters from 120 countries around the world made the journey to Iraq and Syria to support and fight with IS.[10] The demographics of individuals who chose to join are characterized by extreme diversity in the ages, origins, backgrounds, and overall conditions but with a trend towards youth and a higher number of women than might be anticipated.[11]

E.   HISTORICAL CONTEXT

There is a long history of foreign fighters traveling to fight for a cause in another nation. Examples include the American Revolution, the Greek War of Independence or the Spanish Civil War as well as a subset of Muslim foreign fighters throughout history.[12]

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[9] "Foreign Terrorist Fighters," *United Nations Security Council Counter-Terrorism Committee* (blog), accessed November 13, 2018, https://www.un.org/sc/ctc/focus-areas/foreign-terrorist-fighters/.

[10] Arsla Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees: The Challenges of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Policies," *Journal of Peacebuilding & Development* 12, no. 2 (2017): 2, https://doi.org/10.1080/15423166.2017.1323660.

[11] Lorenzo Vidino, "European Foreign Fighters in Syria: Dynamics and Responses," *European View* 13, no. 2 (December 2014): 220, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12290-014-0316-4.

[12] Georgia Holmer and Adrian Shtuni, *Returning Foreign Fighters and the Reintegration Imperative* (Washington, DC: United States Institute of Peace, 2017), https://www.usip.org/publications/2017/03/returning-foreign-fighters-and-reintegration-imperative.

Current research categorizes Islamic foreign fighters of the modern era into four waves that began in the 1980s in their conflict with the Soviets in Afghanistan. This was followed by a second wave in the 1990s in the conflicts in Chechnya, Bosnia, Kashmir, and the Philippines. The third wave began after 9/11 and is associated with the American conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan. The fourth wave is the current group of fighters from around the world who surged to support the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, or related groups, starting in 2011.[13] This most recent wave of fighters differentiates itself from its predecessors both in methods of recruitment and in the overarching goals of the organizations they support.

F.   RETURNING HOME

ISIS surprised much of the world as they began to claim enormous swaths of territory in eastern Syria and northern and western Iraq beginning in 2011. Multiple offensives began in 2012 and reached a high point in 2015 with the declaration of the Islamic Caliphate. That swift and disproportionate success was combined with modern tools of propaganda to encourage the fourth wave of foreign fighters this thesis is examining.[14] Since that high point in 2015, IS has been pushed out of much of their previously held territory and many fighters who managed to survive, found themselves displaced or in the hands of their enemy. Devastating IS losses resulted in the exodus of many fighters and supporters to their nations of origin or in search of further conflict elsewhere.[15]

The Soufan Center, a think tank that focuses global security issues and emerging threats, allocates returnees into five categories. The first category consists of those fighters who made it to the conflict but returned after only a short period of time. The second are those who returned after a more significant amount of time but have returned disillusioned

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[13] Holmer and Shtuni, 402.

[14] Patrick Cockburn, "Who Are Isis? The Rise of the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant," *Independent*, June 16, 2014, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/who-are-isis-the-rise-of-the-islamic-state-in-iraq-and-the-levant-9541421.html.

[15] Andrea Beccaro, "ISIS in Mosul and Sirte: Differences and Similarities," *Mediterranean Politics* 23, no. 3 (July 2018): 410–17, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2017.1330649.

after discovering that it was not everything they thought it would be. The third category is those fighters who eventually return but have had their fill of violence. The fourth type of returnee is those who were either forced out of the conflict zone or who were captured and eventually returned to their state of origin. The final and potentially most dangerous type of returnee is one who is still fully committed to the Jihadist cause and is moving to another state for the express purpose of supporting it.[16]

The first two categories of returnee are potentially a less significant threat than the others and could even serve as a resource for security forces, Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programs and the international intelligence and counter terror community. Many of these, but certainly not all, have also been processed through their government's judicial and security systems. In states like Tunisia, most fighters and returnees belonging to these categories are at least known to the state security services and are under surveillance and required to report regularly to the state.[17] The third category is a potential pool of fighters for extremists in future conflicts but does not pose an immediate threat. The social, political and economic circumstances that pushed them towards jihad in the first place may eventually reignite their desire to conduct attacks or reconnect with extremist networks. They could be described as disengaged, as they may still embrace jihadist beliefs but are no longer willing to act on them. This would be in contrast to someone who has undergone full deradicalization and no longer believes in the cause.[18] Those who have fully deradicalized would have to essentially start their radicalization process over completely again to be considered a violent threat.

The final two categories pose the greatest threat to their home nations and their under-governed neighbors in the region as they have the highest potential for violence and destabilization. The challenge lies in determining which category a returnee may fall into

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[16] Barrett, Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees, 16.

[17] Lisa Watanabe and Fabien Merz, "Tunisia's Jihadi Problem and How to Deal with It," *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 4 (December 2017): 142, https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12312.

[18] Angel Rabasa, Stacie L. Pettyjohn, and Jeremy J. Ghez, *Deradicalizing Islamist Extremists* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation, 2010), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ebook-nps/detail.action?docID=669769.

and political leaders are incentivized to err on the side of caution by treating returnees as viable threats with few means to prove otherwise. Leaders have proven themselves unwilling to accept the risk of approving policies that will potentially come back to bite them if a returnee was designated as low threat and then commits an attack either at home or abroad.[19] These categories are only for returnees from the conflict in Iraq and Syria and do not describe extremist supporters who never left or were blocked from travelling in support of IS but remain a potential source of danger.

G.   STATE RESPONSES TO RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTERS

The policy responses of most nations regarding the return of foreign fighters generally fall into three categories. The first and often most preferred is one of elimination. Nations across the economic and political spectrum have stated they would prefer fighters be eliminated on the battlefield.[20] While IS and its affiliates suffered serious casualties during the collapse of the physical caliphate, significant numbers of both local and foreign fighters remain and are either displaced or imprisoned by the security forces in the region. This leads to the second broad category of policy response, which is a legalistic and security focused policy emphasizing punishment on return or capture, criminal liability, and utilization of the security forces and the law to interdict returnees. Morocco is an example of a nation that has chosen a particularly hard lined security-focused response. They have enacted laws that mandate strong penalties of 5–15 years and a 500,000 Moroccan Dirham (~ $55,000) fine for even attempting to join a non-state armed organization.[21] States across the world have also implemented laws and changed their own policies to revoke travel documents, criminalize certain kinds of travel and broadened the scope of prosecutorial powers in response to the foreign fighter threat. Australia has even gone so far as to strip IS supporters of their citizenship and criminalizing their presence in proscribed areas with life

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[19] Lisa Watanabe, *The Next Steps of North Africa's Foreign Fighters*, CSS Analysis in Security Policy 222 (Zurich: Center for Security Studies (CSS), 2018), http://www.css.ethz.ch/content/dam/ethz/special-interest/gess/cis/center-for-securities-studies/pdfs/CSSAnalyse222-EN.pdf.

[20] Malet and Hayes, "Foreign Fighter Returnees: An Indefinite Threat?"

[21] Jawaid, "From Foreign Fighters to Returnees: The Challenges of Rehabilitation and Reintegration Policies," 104.

imprisonment. This leaves them stateless and potentially increases the probability that fighters and their families will either attempt to return illicitly or travel to an under governed state like Libya where they can find some semblance of stability and a way forward.

States that choose to utilize the courts to prosecute returning fighters also face the challenge of meeting a legal standard of proof and evidence. Explicit proof of an individual's acts and crimes while in the service of the Islamic State can prove to be a significant hurdle to prosecutors and may potentially result in radicalized individuals being released after a relatively short prison stay into the community due to a lack of evidence. Most returnees to the U.S. and Europe from previous waves of Islamic foreign fighters spent less than five years in prison before their eventual release.[22]

The third category of state response is that of deradicalization programs and attempts to reintegrate individuals into society. There have been a variety of programs that have attempted to reform Islamic-inspired terrorists in recent years and the results have been mixed at best. These policies require a high level of organization, governmental capacity, and significant resources, and they often generate political pressure for leaders who are accused of being "soft on terrorists." Australian officials have reported that it costs nearly $8,000,000 to observe a returnee for one year.[23] The political will and resources required for these types of programs makes them difficult to implement. The total number of returnees may make such a program unfeasible to implement on a broad scale but the potential exists for returnees who are deemed to pose the lowest risk.

H.   WHAT IS MISSING?

An analysis of the current body of research shows that the most effort has gone into estimating the numbers of returnees from conflicts and whether or not they chose to continue on a path of violence. Less emphasis has been placed on who is receiving these individuals as they return home individually or in small groups or family units.

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[22] Malet and Hayes, "Foreign Fighter Returnees: An Indefinite Threat?"

[23] Daniel Byman, "The Jihadist Returnee Threat: Just How Dangerous?: The Jihadist Returnee Threat," *Political Science Quarterly* 131, no. 1 (March 2017): 91, https://doi.org/10.1002/polq.12434.

The study of these individuals or organizations operating outside of official state authority would be a significant contribution to the body of work on returning foreign fighters. This study would potentially identify a methodology to identify friendly, neutral or enemy organizations or networks that will act as the front line of receiving fighters, supporters and accompanying family members. These could include NGOs, family and friends, religious networks in addition to outright extremist organizations.

NGOs, family, friends and religious networks all have the potential to increase or decrease the odds that a returning fighter will decide to strike on return. There is also limited information on how the return of a foreign fighter increases the probability that family and friends are more likely to be recruited into future extremist organizations.

I.   METHODOLOGY

In addition to the specific groups and political organizations identified as being the most likely to receive foreign fighters, one of the primary products of this thesis is an effective methodology that can be used in the future to increase situational awareness of the political, economic and social issues in a given area and also serve as a means to identify online accounts of interest in the furtherance of national goals. This process is broken down into two parts. The first is the macro level that involves the development of case studies on a given area. For the purpose of this thesis, the case studies focus on the groups and organizations in Tunisia and Libya most likely to receive foreign fighters as they return from the conflict in Iraq and Syria. These case studies will then be used at the micro level to gather data using the Zignal Labs online application and to conduct social network analysis using Gephi network analysis program to identify accounts and individuals of interest.

1.   Macro Level—Case Studies

Case studies will be developed for Libya and Tunisia in order to determine which groups and organizations would be most likely to receive returning foreign fighters and their supporters as they travel from Iraq and Syria. These case studies will examine governing bodies, political groups, extremist organizations and are not necessarily focused exclusively on "bad actors." These case studies will highlight the practices and policies of the organizations in regards to returnees and their families. This analysis will help to identify

which policies are likely to be successful in mitigating the risk of returnees and which are likely to drive them toward violent extremism and the groups and individuals most likely to exploit that willingness to commit violence locally and regionally.

2.   Micro Level—Zignal, Gephi, and Social Network Analysis (SNA)

The Zignal toolset will be used to analyze and gather data from social and traditional online media to identify pertinent organizations and individuals and identify key concepts as they relate to RFFs.[24] Other Internet sites identified to be containing useful documents include other messaging sites like Telegram, sites for archiving posts in case they are taken down, and sites for posting files (like Google Drive, Dropbox, Amazon Drive, and upload-files.eu).

The data from Zignal will be extracted into a dataset and analyzed using the Gephi Analysis program. This program will allow us to conduct social network analysis and identify individual accounts of interest. Gephi allows analysts to exercise fundamental SNA through graphical depictions of the network and also through some key metrics to highlight accounts of note. The metrics to be used in this study are hub, authority and betweenness centrality. Additionally, Gephi has a modularity algorithm, originally used to identify the network capacity of websites, which allows analysts to further divide the larger network into smaller subclusters of densely connected accounts sharing similar characteristics.

The methodology used in this process has been designed to be flexible enough to be utilized easily and repeatedly to identify new accounts and individuals of interest in the future. The programs and analysis are viable options for Western partners of Libya and Tunisia like Department of Defense (USAFRICOM or SOCAF) or Department of State. They could also be utilized by civilian partners in the private or IGO realm in advancement of economic stability. All data collected is open source and available to the public.

This methodology assumes that many of the returning fighters are savvy enough to remain inconspicuous and "below the radar" on open source social networks such as Twitter.

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[24] "Home," Zignal Labs, accessed April 5, 2018, http://zignallabs.com/.

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II.   TUNISIA

A.   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on Tunisia and the political, social and economic environment that resulted in it serving as the source for more foreign fighters than any other nation in the world. This case study will examine the role of Tunisia as the spark of the Arab Spring as well as the fallout that came after the collapse of the Ben Ali regime. That period of transition contributed directly to an environment that produced significant numbers of dissatisfied youth who were especially susceptible to IS propaganda and recruitment. Additionally, I will examine how that environment has changed since the flow of foreign fighters has ebbed and which groups and organizations are currently in a position to receive returnees in the immediate future. The chapter concludes with a prioritized breakdown of which groups pose the greatest risks as well as which governmental policies are either contributing to or mitigating the extremist ideologies of returnees.

B.   BACKGROUND

Tunisia served as the spark that helped start the Arab Spring uprisings with their own Jasmine Revolution and the overthrow of the Ben Ali regime in 2011.[25] Zine El Abidine Ben Ali led a regime for 24 years that had banned Islamist parties and repressed the forms of Islam it deemed to be a potential political or social threat. After Ben Ali's ousting, thousands of Islamic activists and supporters who had been either jailed or fled the country years before returned in 2011 and 2012 to form the core of the Salafist movement.[26] This Salafist network was an essential component in the radicalization of Tunisian youth and helped in both indoctrination, radicalization and facilitation of travel

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[25] Watanabe and Merz, "Tunisia's Jihadi Problem and How to Deal with It," 136.

[26] Stefano M. Torelli, Fabio Merone, and Francesco Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization," *Middle East Policy* 19, no. 4 (Winter 2012): 140, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4967.2012.00566.x.

and training in support of extremist groups like the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria as well as the ongoing conflicts in Libya.[27]

The government that followed the Jasmine Revolution was one led by the Ennahda Party. Ennahda was Islamically based but publicly chose to operate within a governmental and democratic framework. They won the first election in 2012 with 40% of the vote and led a coalition government with two secular parties.[28] At the time, Ennahda reached out to Salafist organizations and smaller political parties in an attempt to integrate them into the burgeoning democracy and as a means to cement their own political power. Those parties and organizations, including groups like AST, were members of networks established in prison or in exile abroad during the Ben Ali years. Their leaders also drew upon local organic support that had been suppressed during the Ben Ali regime.[29] They advocated strongly for a government and justice system based on the concept of Sharia law. When this did not occur under Ennahda's leadership, the tenuous alliance fractured split and Salafist groups like AST retreated further out of the realm of governance and into opposition. This was a foreshadowing of their eventual banning and outright opposition to the recognized government and its policies.[30]

Salafism in Tunisia was a minority sect but could lay claim to an energized and numerically significant membership base. At its peak, there were over 30,000 Salafists, mostly young men, who gathered in 2012 at the Salafist Kairouan Congress as members of AST to promote the role of Islam in the new government. In 2013, Tunisia's government labeled AST a terrorist organization and banned their organization after the assassinations of left leaning politicians Chokri Belaid and Mohamed Brahmi.[31] This severed their final connections to a democratic governmental framework along with their ability to address

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[27] Aaron Y. Zelin, "The Rise and Decline of Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya," *Current Trends in Islamist Ideology* 18 (May 2015): 104–18.

[28] Garrett Nada, "The Islamist Spectrum - Tunisia: From Democrats to Jihadis," Wilson Center, August 7, 2017, https://www.wilsoncenter.org/article/the-islamist-spectrum-tunisia-democrats-to-jihadis.

[29] Geoffrey Macdonald and Luke Waggoner, "Dashed Hopes and Extremism in Tunisia," *Journal of Democracy* 29, no. 1 (2018): 126–40, https://doi.org/10.1353/jod.2018.0010.

[30] Watanabe and Merz, "Tunisia's Jihadi Problem and How to Deal with It," 139–43.

[31] Nada, "The Islamist Spectrum - Tunisia."

grievances and increased the perceived separation from mainstream Tunisian society. This withdrawal from formal government contributed to the perception of power gaps and helped fuel the call for Jihad. The organization suffered as its members were arrested or fled the country to join groups like Ansar al-Sharia in Libya (ASL) in Libya or the burgeoning IS in Iraq and Syria.

C. RETURNEES

Tunisia is unique because it is, per capita, the state with the highest number of fighters who chose to go support the Islamic State with some estimates placing that number as high as 8,000. In addition to those fighters, at least 1,000 fighters traveled to neighboring Libya to help support the Islamic State as they made their first significant attempt at the expansion of the caliphate outside of Iraq and Syria in 2014.[32]

Exact numbers of returnees are difficult to determine. Tunisia has improved its security forces and border protections since the revolution and the transition period that followed it. As of mid-2016, there have been an estimated 800 returnees who have come back to Tunisia following Islamic State losses in Iraq and Syria.[33] It is reasonable to expect that number has grown since that time. Government officials are working to identify as many returnees as possible but admit that the weakened security forces and intelligence systems of the 2011–2014 Tunisian government were not up to the task of cataloguing departing fighters or their families. While those systems have improved, with the support of western partners, the tally of departed and returning fighters and their families remains incomplete.[34]

D. GRIEVANCES AND CONDITIONS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO THE DECISION TO SUPPORT SALAFI-JIHADISM

Tunisians, especially youth, who chose to answer the call to Jihad did so for a variety of reasons but there are some common and recurring themes. In addition to the

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[32] Nada.

[33] Barrett, Beyond the Caliphate: Foreign Fighters and the Threat of Returnees.

[34] Watanabe, The Next Steps of North Africa's Foreign Fighters.

more common "call to adventure" type of incentives, Tunisian youth were especially vulnerable for several reasons. There were expectations by many that the installment of a new government would significantly improve the lives and overall well-being of all classes of the Tunisian population. The lack of economic growth coupled with a perception of strong inequities between under employed youth and the government was a significant contributor to the Tunisian foreign fighter movement.[35] Many members of the Tunisian citizenry, including those who do not support extremist activities, have seen their economic and social conditions remain stagnant or even worsen over time. Additionally, areas that were historically neglected even before the regime change, like the western provinces in the country, continued to receive little support from the elites and the government and saw it as confirmation that they could not count on the new government.[36] These aggravating conditions applied to both men and women who helped contribute to the nearly 700 Tunisian women who also traveled to Iraq and Syria in support of the Islamic State. Research shows that family and friends of fighters shared similar grievances to the fighters themselves even if many never crossed the tipping point towards violence or extremism.[37]

Geoffrey MacDonald and Luke Waggoner describe the apparent political paradox that resulted in the outpouring of fighters from a country that was attempting to establish a democratic system of government. They assert that the 2011 revolution "created a combustible mix of rising and unmanaged social expectations and declining institutional capacity, in a climate of persistent socioeconomic grievances."[38] In short, the expansion of freedom of expression in a post Ali Tunisia created expectations that neither the society nor the government was able to meet. MacDonald and Waggoner emphasize that it is not poverty itself that drives extremism but the expectations and perceptions of a population.

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[35] Torelli, Merone, and Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization," 142.

[36] Torelli, Merone, and Cavatorta.

[37] Macdonald and Waggoner, "Dashed Hopes and Extremism in Tunisia," 130.

[38] Macdonald and Waggoner, 127.

E. PUSH AND PULL FACTORS: TUNISIA AS A "PUSH" STATE

The Combating Terrorism Center at West Point defines push factors as the "the negative social, cultural, and political features of one's societal environment that aid in "pushing" vulnerable individuals onto the path of violent extremism."[39] They are more commonly thought of as "root causes" and examples include poverty, discrimination, and the perception of a lack of social or political power. Pull factors "are the perceived positive characteristics and advantages that entice an individual to join a group. The strength of pull factors ebb and flow with the fortunes of extremist groups over time."[40]

While there are both push and pull factors that incentivized the initial influx of foreign fighters in Tunisia, the political, cultural and social environment can primarily be categorized as one of a "push state." This contrasts with its neighbor, Libya, whose environment is most accurately categorized as a "pull state." This is true in both the role of a destination for jihadists and a transportation and training hub with minimal threat of consequence from a government in authority. Many of the factors that contributed to the "push" of Salafi jihadists from Tunisia to Iraq, Syria and Libya have not abated and in some cases have even become more pronounced in the intervening years. The perception of a lack of opportunity in the social, political and economic realm has remained a constant since the revolution. This has fueled a perceived gap between the elites and the average citizen and in addition to creating unfulfilled expectations it has also contributed to a decline in the government specifically and democracy in general. Many of the Tunisian policies have also continued to ignore historically neglected geographic areas in Tunisia outside of the largest population hubs and along the coast and to many are reminiscent of the pre-revolutionary era.[41]

These factors were the driving force that pushed so many Tunisian youth towards extremist groups like IS or even neighboring ASL or AQIM. There is little evidence to

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[39] Muhsin Hassan, "Understanding Drivers of Violent Extremism: The Case of Al-Shabab and Somali Youth," *CTC Sentinel* 5, no. 8 (August 2012): 18–20.

[40] Hassan.

[41] Torelli, Merone, and Cavatorta, "Salafism in Tunisia: Challenges and Opportunities for Democratization," 144.

suggest that any of these grievances have been addressed in recent years and, if anything, are on track to become more acute as the Tunisian government implements more austerity measures and the overall economic forecast of the country continues to darken. This is in addition to the destabilizing effect of Libya and the countries own protracted internal insurgency in the western portion of the country.[42]

F. WHO WILL RECEIVE RETURNING FOREIGN FIGHTERS?

1. The Tunisian Government

Many returned foreign fighters have begun to process through the Tunisian judicial system and have either been jailed or are under house arrest with the requirement to "check in" with authorities on a regular basis. However, due to the limited resources and capacity of the penal system, many returning fighters will face relatively short period of confinement.[43] During their imprisonment or the time immediately following it, they may face further efforts to strengthen or reignite their extremist beliefs. Even returnees who came back to Tunisia with no intent to rejoin violent movements may find themselves relying on the old networks that helped radicalize them in the first place or groups who place value on their experiences on the battlefield in Iraq and Syria.

2. Western Insurgency

Over the last seven years the Tunisian security forces have been fighting a local insurgency in its western borderlands that have resulted in the deaths of nearly 120 soldiers, national guardsmen and police officers. The borderland provinces can be seen in Figure 1. There is an even higher number wounded as a result of this conflict. The two primary groups conducting this insurgency against the Tunisian government are Katiba Uqba ibn Nafi (KUIN), affiliated with al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM), and the Islamic State–linked Jund al-Khilafah-Tunisia (JAK-T). These groups, while associated with

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[42] Matt Herbert, "The Insurgency in Tunisia's Western Borderlands," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, June 28, 2018, 1–6, https://carnegieendowment.org/2018/06/28/insurgency-in-tunisia-s-western-borderlands-pub-76712.

[43] Malet and Hayes, "Foreign Fighter Returnees: An Indefinite Threat?"

Islamic aligned terror groups, are driven as much by financial inducements as they are by ideology.[44]

Figure 1.   Tunisian Governorates at the Center of Militant Operations[45]

3.   Political Parties

a.   *Ennahda*

Ennahda remains the primary Islamic party in Tunisia even after the constitutional reforms of 2014. While they have appeared willing to operate within the limits of democratic norms, there is also a perception that Ennahda was overly tolerant of Salafist political extremism when compared to secular dissidents. Police allowed the Salafist

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[44] Herbert, "The Insurgency in Tunisia's Western Borderlands."

[45] Herbert.

occupation of Manouba University to drag on for weeks but quickly broke up anti-Ennahda demonstrations in 2012.[46] Ennahda's culture of plurality and toleration of internal dissent, within the confines of an Islamic framework, comes from their founding and the desire to be as inclusive as possible to cement political power.[47] The perception of Ennahda tolerance declined with drafting of the new constitution and the banning of AST but faith in the party overall is still flagging with little prospect for change in the immediate future.

Ennahda faces the challenge of retaining a youthful portion of their party as political participation has dropped significantly over time among both secular and religious portions of the population, especially youth. The high expectations that came with revolution were not met with tangible success and this has created socio-economic stagnation and the perception of a power gap. This has undermined the belief in the value of legislative change and Ennahda, as well as other moderate political groups, struggle to maintain stability and faith in their ability to govern fairly.

b.   Salafist Parties: Jabhat al-Islah (JI) and Al-Rahma (Mercy)

The political crisis and assassinations of 2013 led to the resignation of the government and the drafting of a new constitution. Tunisia continues to govern as a secular democracy, but does allows religiously aligned parties, like Ennahda, to operate within it. As of this writing, two Salafist political parties are permitted to officially exist. They are Jabhat al Islah (JI) and Hizb al Tahrir (HT). They are allowed to organize and operate within Tunisia but their affiliates been banned in several other countries.[48] They work on the edge of legality and Tunisia may eventually ban them in the same manner AST was in 2013.[49]

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[46] Daveed Gartenstein-Ross, "Springtime for Salafists," *Foreign Policy* (blog), accessed November 27, 2018, https://foreignpolicy.com/2013/03/26/springtime-for-salafists/.

[47] Anne Wolf, Political Islam in Tunisia: The History of Ennahda (London: Hurst & Co., 2018).

[48] Nada, "The Islamist Spectrum - Tunisia."

[49] Aaron Y. Zelin, "Meeting Tunisia's Ansar Al-Sharia," Washington Institute for Near East Policy, March 8, 2013, http://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/meeting-tunisias-ansar-al-sharia.

JI was the first Salafist political group founded in accordance with the Political Parties Law. That law required the acknowledgement of the "civil principles of the state" to include a respect for democracy and a rejection of violence. This group faces a similar challenge as Ennahda and lacks a younger generation of members.[50] Al-Rahma was the second recognized Salafist Party but with the stated goal of the establishment of Sharia law. While these parties currently hold little political power, JI and HT could serve as mobilizing structures for extremists to undermine the existing democratic Tunisian government by serving as a foothold in the future. These parties have not expressed any specific policies regarding the return of foreign fighters beyond their normal support for Salafi ideology. This is at least partly due to their desire to not follow in the footsteps of groups like AST who were banned after their ideology and activities were deemed too extreme and disruptive.

4. Ansar al-Sharia (AST)

AST claims to have been successful in their recruitment efforts in the past due, in part, to their willingness to provide for their communities in a way that the Tunisian government failed to do after the fall of the Ben Ali government. AST leaders claimed that a combination of charity work, proselytizing and aid distribution all contributed to nearly 70,000 members prior to 2014.[51] Similar examples of organizations deemed extremist exist all around the world. Hezbollah and their sister organization ASL being some examples.

The banning of AST as a political party is believed by some to reinforce the message the Salafism and democracy are not compatible. It also helped push sympathetic Salafists out of a purely Tunisian local context and facilitated a dispersion into the region

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[50] Nada, "The Islamist Spectrum - Tunisia."

[51] "Tunisia: Extremism & Counter-Extremism," Counter Extremism Project, March 8, 2016, https://www.counterextremism.com/countries/tunisia.

at large.[52] It is reasonable to expect that these messages will continue to spread to Salafi communities in Tunisia and to returning foreign fighters.

AST used social media to spread their Salafist message until their eventual banning in 2014.[53] Tunisian security services continue to pressure Salafist advocates to this day. AST's former spokesperson, Sayf al-Din Ben Rayes, was arrested in 2018 even after publicly disavowing his support of IS but praising their actions at the same time.[54] One of the most significant risks the fragile Tunisian government faces is the subversion of legal political parties and religious organizations by AST or similar groups. This would most likely be through the acts of dawa, which helped AST gain so much support in previous years.

AST, in addition to being previously financed by both AQ and IS, supported itself through a network of charities and legal organizations that provide support. AST has divided its declared support to both AQIM and IS in recent years. While the majority of support has appeared to remain with AQIM, the return of fighters and their families could tip the scales.[55]

G.   TUNISIAN POLICY

Tunisia has taken a relatively hardline stance toward returning fighters, in line with many of their neighbors in the Maghreb but there have been some efforts to provide flexibility to authorities and local leaders in dealing with returnees.[56] In 2014, former President Moncef Marzouki proposed legislation that would provide a path for some

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[52] Fabio Merone, "Between Social Contention and Takfirism: The Evolution of the Salafi-Jihadi Movement in Tunisia," *Mediterranean Politics* 22, no. 1 (January 2017): 73, https://doi.org/10.1080/13629395.2016.1230949.

[53] Zelin, "Meeting Tunisia's Ansar Al-Sharia."

[54] "Tunisia Arrests Former 'Ansar al-Sharia' Spokesman on Suspicion of Terrorism," Asharq Al-Awsat, March 7, 2018, https://aawsat.com/english/home/article/1197176/tunisia-arrests-former-%E2%80%98ansar-al-sharia%E2%80%99-spokesman-suspicion-terrorism.

[55] Lisa Watanabe, "Islamic State in North Africa: Still There, Struggling to Expand," *Middle East Policy* 24, no. 2 (Summer 2017): 142, https://doi.org/10.1111/mepo.12274.

[56] Andrew McDonnell, "A Community Approach to Jihadis' Rehabilitation in Tunisia," Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, September 27, 2018, http://carnegieendowment.org/sada/77358.

returnees to reenter society. While there was, and remains, little political will for returnee policies that extend beyond incarceration, the Tunisian judicial and prison system is stretched far beyond its capacity. A path to reintegration was proposed to avoid the potentially counterproductive act of simply imprisoning all returnees who would then face a risk of further radicalization in a confined environment.[57] We have previously discussed the motivations for Tunisian foreign fighter's departure and return. However, it is expected that a significant portion of those returning and making themselves known to authorities will most likely fall into the first three of the Soufan returnee categories. These are fighters who returned after only a short stay, returned after an extended stay but disillusioned, and fighters who returned but have had their fill of violence and are essentially disengaged.

These are the individuals who are most likely to be responsive to some form of a DDR program but, as stated previously, ascertaining individual motivations in both the short and long term is politically risky and extremely difficult to execute with certainty.

H. POLITICAL FRAGILITY

Polling as of 2016 has shown a steady decline in the positive attitudes toward the Tunisian State.[58] Fighters and their families are returning to a Tunisia with a plummeting political participation from both non-Islamic and Islamic youth.[59] In 2016, only 20% of Tunisians said that they trusted Parliament and only 12% had trust in the political parties. Overall support for democracy as a form of government has declined from 63% in 2012 to 48% in 2014. The most notable polling statistic is the expression that 95% of the youth surveyed expressed a "lack of confidence in political parties and nearly that number were disillusioned with the Parliament.[60] These statistics are reflective of the high expectations

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[57] McDonnell.

[58] Macdonald and Waggoner, "Dashed Hopes and Extremism in Tunisia," 130.

[59] Sarah Yerkes, *Where Have All the Revolutionaries Gone* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, Center for Middle East Policy, 2017), https://www.brookings.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/cmep_20160317_where_have_revolutionaries_gone.pdf.

[60] Şebnem Yardımcı-Geyikçi and Özlem Tür, "Rethinking the Tunisian Miracle: A Party Politics View," *Democratization* 25, no. 5 (2018): 788, https://doi.org/10.1080/13510347.2017.1422120.

that many members of Tunisian society had for the post Ben Ali years and their extreme dissatisfaction just five years later as those expectations were not met.[61] The evolution of the Tunisian government from the repressive Ben Ali regime to a constitutional democracy with three elections under its belt is still seen as more of the same. There is no reason to expect that faith in Tunisian government, its institutions and its political leadership will rise until there is a rise in the perception of accountability and economic and social gains that apply across the demographic spectrum.[62]

I. PREDICTIONS

Returning fighters, and those that support them, could destabilize the Tunisian state and the region in two ways. The first and most obvious is their convergence with existing extremist networks that are connected to the criminal and jihadi networks that have operated in the region for years. Those individuals may choose the path of criminality and extremism due to an inherent desire to continue the policies and goals of IS or they may just be attempting to avoid the legal and social consequences of their return. While groups like AST are blacklisted within the country, many of their networks still exist and the potential exists to see the convergence of returnees, local sympathizers, religious supporters and insurgent networks like those seen in the western provinces.

Researchers found that close family and friends of Tunisian fighters were generally unsupportive of the Islamic State and the fighter's decision to join them. On its face, this would appear to be a positive force to prevent returnees from converging with bad actors. However, without addressing the other societal conditions that led many to support IS, such as low unemployment and high dissatisfaction with government, returnees may gravitate towards those who helped them make the decision to travel in the first place.[63]

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[61] Yardımcı-Geyikçi and Tür, 788.

[62] Yardımcı-Geyikçi and Tür, 798.

[63] Geoffrey Macdonald and Luke Waggoner, "Why Are so Many Tunisians Joining the Islamic State?," *Washington Post*, January 27, 2017, https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/monkey-cage/wp/2017/01/27/why-are-so-many-tunisians-joining-the-islamic-state/.

J.   CONCLUSION

Many of the conditions and grievances that helped spur the mass of Tunisian fighters are still in place and in some cases are even more acute. One of the important distinctions, when compared to the 2011–2014 era of mass departures, is the growth of the Tunisian security services and the strengthening of government institutions and capacity. While Tunisian democracy is not as stable or as capable as many in the West believe, it is significantly more capable than it was in the years following the regime change. The overthrow of the Ben Ali regime greatly reduced the Tunisian state's ability to control their own, already porous, borders and secure the state internally. Since that time, Tunisia has worked with international partners and bordering neighbor states to strengthen their security forces and their border through a variety of partnerships and agreements.

While the government has expanded its security and intelligence capacities, the current Tunisian system is perceived by many as "more of the same" socially, politically and economically. Faith in the government specifically and in democracy more broadly is on the decline as the expectations of many Tunisians, especially youth, continue to meet reality. This is likely to continue if the government continues to neglect historically ignored portions of their populations and as they continue to implement more austerity measures in an effort to stabilize and grow their economy.

The laws and policies put in place by Tunisian leaders are limited by the relative fragility of the state and the finite capacity of the government. Prisons and the judiciary are already strained beyond capacity and the potential return of 1000s of foreign fighters and their families will strain the system even more. Insurgency in the west and cross border flows of criminals and jihadists will continue to tax the Tunisian capacity to its limit.

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III.   LIBYA

A.   INTRODUCTION

This chapter will focus on Libya and the movements and organizations vying for power within a state that is severely under governed and internally fractured. Internationally recognized political bodies are in competition with each other for power. This is all occurring while the competing governments work to continue to push back violent extremist groups like IS, ASL and a firmly established criminal network that spans beyond Libya's borders and across the region and into Europe and the Middle East. The competing governments currently lack the capacity to enact effective widespread policies in regard to the return of foreign fighters.

Even though groups like IS and ASL have faced significant setbacks in Libya in recent years, they still maintain a significant presence and are taking full advantage of the discord and lack of faith in the ability of the government to lead Libya out of its social, political and economic morass. The pressure that either government has been able to mount against extremist groups like IS, ASL or the Muslim Brotherhood have also had negative impacts that could drive returnees back towards the networks that helped radicalize them in the first place.

B.   BACKGROUND

Libya is unique when compared to other states in North Africa, like Morocco or Tunisia. In addition to local insurgents and militias with grievances against either of the competing governments, jihadists and their supporters have coalesced in Libya from much of Africa, Europe and the Middle East. Libya as an under-governed state is an appealing destination for both Libyans and foreign fighters from other nations seeking either refuge or a base for further operations in the region. The diversity of fighters could result in an ideological base with both the potential and the incentive to reach beyond state borders and stretch across the region

In addition to serving as a logistical, facilitation and training hub for fighters travelling to support IS in Iraq and Syria between 2011 and 2015, many foreign fighters

have chosen to remain or have since returned as IS collapsed in the fall of 2016. This chapter illuminates Libya's role as a hub for jihadists, returning fighters and the families. Actual policies and legislation are effectively non-existent as the Government of National Accord (GNA) and the House of Representatives (HoR) compete with each other for power.

1. Political History

Libya had been under the rule of Muammar Gaddafi since his assumption of power after a coup d'état against King Idris in 1969. He ruled for over 40 years and maintained a complicated and often adversarial relationship with the international community during that time, due to numerous allegations of human rights violations and his support of terrorism around the world. That strained relationship helped contribute to the decision of NATO to support rebel anti-Gaddafi forces, who were themselves primed by the Arab Spring, and conduct bombing air strikes in support of their efforts to overthrow the regime in the summer and fall of 2011. Rebel forces formed the National Transitional Council (NTC) and in partnership with NATO, managed to oust Gaddafi after ten months of conflict and tens of thousands of dead or wounded. The first Libyan Civil War appeared to come to an end in October of 2011 following the capture and execution of Gaddafi in Sirte.[64]

As of 2018, Libya stands as the fourth-largest fighter mobilization country in Jihad history with an estimated 700 Libyans fighting in Iraq and Syria in support of IS.[65] This is in addition to its use as a transit and training hub for local conflicts facilitating attacks on neighbors like Tunisia and the flow of fighters to Iraq and Syria in support of IS. While significant portions of Libya, especially the southern border regions, were historically under governed, the collapse of the Gaddafi regime and the ensuing conflict provided a unique opportunity for extremists and foreign fighters of varied backgrounds and origins.

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[64] Yehudit Ronen, "Libya: Teetering Between War and Diplomacy The Islamic State's Role in Libya's Disintegration," *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 28, no. 1 (January 2017): 110–27, https://doi.org/10.1080/09592296.2017.1275518.

[65] Aaron Y. Zelin, *The Others: Foreign Fighters in Libya*, Policy Notes 45 (Washington, DC: The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 2018), 1, https://www.washingtoninstitute.org/policy-analysis/view/the-others-foreign-fighters-in-libya-and-the-islamic-state.

The temporary NTC and the current Government of National Accord (GNA), which continues to struggle to exert its influence, have proven themselves to be inadequate to the task of completely removing the extremist factions still operating within its borders.[66]

Libya's role as a hub for jihadists, migrants, training and logistics is well established with historical routes throughout the African continent leading to pathways in the Middle East and Europe. Even prior to the overthrow of Gaddafi, an assortment of jihadist fighters and sympathizers found their way to Libya and helped form the core of Jihadist groups like the Libyan Islamic Fighting Group (LIFG) and eventually Ansar Al Sharia in Libya (ASL), Ansar Al Sharia in Tunisia (AST), Al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM) and the Islamic State (IS).[67]

The fresh conflict that came about after Gaddafi's fall provided an opportunity for IS, as it attempted to expand the reach of the caliphate beyond captured territories in Iraq and Syria. Between 2014 and 2016, IS sent thousands of its own fighters to Libya to take advantage the governmental and military security vacuum. They proceeded to seize control of key cities like Derna and Sirte while establishing relationships and networks with tribal and jihadists who still harbored resentment at their exclusion from governance both during and after the Gaddafi era.[68] While the Libyan government has been able to strengthen itself with the aid of neighboring states and Western partners in northern Libya, the southern regions and borders with neighbors remain relatively under-governed and unprotected by either the GNA in the east or the HoR in the west.[69]

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[66] Ronen, "Libya," 110.

[67] Emily Estelle, *A Strategy for Success in Libya* (American Enterprise Institute: Washington, DC, 2017), https://www.criticalthreats.org/analysis/a-strategy-for-success-in-libya.

[68] Ronen, "Libya."

[69] Frederic Wehrey, *Insecurity and Governance Challenges in Southern Libya* (Washington, DC: Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, 2017), 30, http://carnegieendowment.org/2017/03/30/insecurity-and-governance-challenges-in-southern-libya-pub-68451.

C. CURRENT POLITICS

Political groups have competed for power since fall of the regime with vary degrees of success. The GNA was recognized by the UN but they remain in competition with other groups seeking to usurp them. These leaders have agreed to hold national elections in December of 2018, as part of an attempt to help unify the country but there is still little consensus. The French led conference that produced this agreement did not, or could not, include representatives from all of the various groups engaged in conflict and that lack of inclusion may make future stability more challenging.[70] Additionally, concerns that elections held in December of 2018 would be premature as security conditions are inadequate for most of the country and the lack of commitment from all parties to the results may result in further fracturing of the various groups and an increase in violence.[71]

D. WHO WILL RECEIVE FOREIGN FIGHTERS AND THEIR SUPPORTERS

As of 2018, Libya is officially governed by the GNA. This body was formed under the terms of the Libyan Political Agreement (LPA) in 2015 and unanimously recognized by the United Nations (UN). The executive branch is nominally led by Fayez al-Sarraj in his role as the Prime Minister and the leader of the Presidential Council (PC) and is based out of a naval base in Tripoli. The recognized legislative body is the HoR based out of Tobruk in the east. Both the legislative and executive are advised by the High Council of State (HCS).[72] Unfortunately, these bodies, while operating within the recognized framework as laid out in the LPA, have been unable to form a cohesive government and are in regular competition with each other for power. This inability to govern has kept Libya mired in political and economic turmoil and resulted in an under governed state that

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[70] "Libya's Rival Leaders Agree to Hold Elections in December," *Al Jazeera*, May 29, 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/news/2018/05/libya-rival-leaders-agree-hold-elections-december-180529082326218.html.

[71] Luigi Scazzieri, *Premature Elections Won't Stabilise Libya* (London: Centre for European Reform, 2018), https://www.cer.eu/insights/premature-elections-wont-stabilise-libya.

[72] Mattia Toaldo and Mary Fitzgerald, "A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players" (London: European Council on Foreign Relations, December 2012), https://www.ecfr.eu/mena/mapping_libya_conflict.

is appealing to local militias and extremist groups, foreign organizations like IS, and a thriving criminal element.

Elections held in 2014, prior to the creation of the LPA, resulted in the defeat of the interim General National Congress (GNC), which itself has assumed power from the NTC after the fall of Gaddafi. The GNC had been elected in 2012 after the regime change with approximately 60% of eligible voters participating. The 2014 election that awarded power to the HoR had a mere 18% turnout rate and was clouded by violence. The results of that election were overturned by the Libyan Supreme Court in November of 2014 but the HoR refused to recognize their decision.[73] This drew dividing lines between the GNC, which leaned towards Islamic mandates and policy, and the HoR, which attracted more of the political moderates and secular power bases. The UN-brokered an agreement between the two groups that eventually became the LPA and resulted in the GNA and the installment of Al-Serraj as prime minister. While the LPA received UN support, neither the GNC nor the HoR have maintained their support for the GNA and this has disrupted the inability of the GNA to govern. The territory in control of both the GNA and the HoR can be seen in Figure 2.
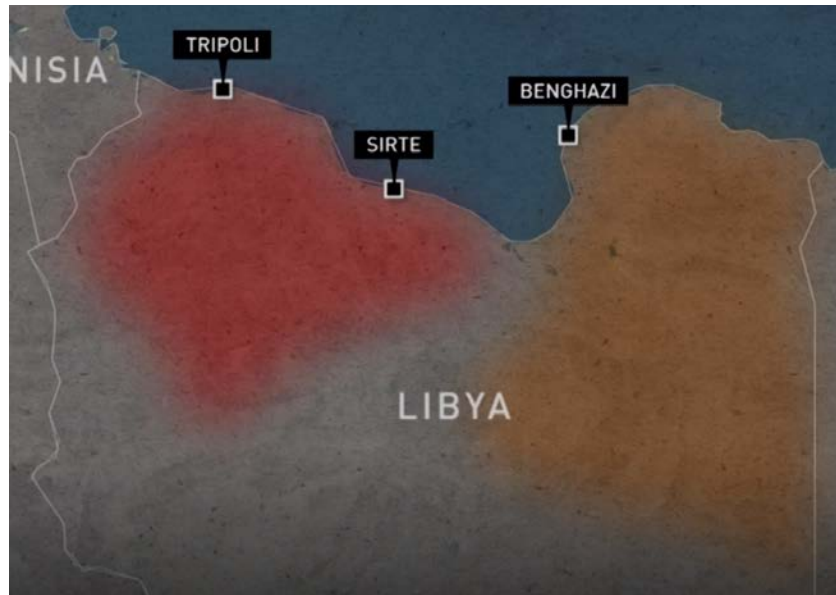
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[73] Toaldo and Fitzgerald.

Figure 2.   Territory Controlled by the GNA Is Red; Territory
Controlled by the LNA Is Yellow[74]

1.   Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord (GNA)

The current government, the GNA, assumed power in 2015 as laid out in the LPA.
The GNA is perceived as weak due to its inability to exert its influence over much of the
country outside of Tripoli.[75] Even the areas controlled by the GNA face regular attack,
which in turn undermines faith in their ability to govern. Al-Sarraj, the Prime Minister, is
not a powerful figure on his own but the Presidential Council does technically have
powerful stakeholders from all factions. Unfortunately, the PC has dwindled to two active
participants, Al-Sarraj and his deputy Ahmed Maiteeq. Neither the HoR nor the HCS have
lent their political, military or economic support to this body in any meaningful or sustained
way. The GNA are heavily reliant on militia forces such as the Misratan militias who were
instrumental in both the fight against Gaddafi and the fight against IS in 2015 and 2016.
The National Oil Company (NOC) and the Central Bank of Libya (CBL) are both formally

[74] Source: Christopher Livesay and Alessandro Pavone, "ISIS Regroups to Attack a Fragmented
Libya," PBS NewsHour, September 29, 2018, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/isis-regroups-to-attack-
a-fragmented-libya.

[75] Toaldo and Fitzgerald, "A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players."

loyal to the PC but have retained close ties with the competing factions, especially those in the east led by the HoR and General Haftar. In short, they have international recognition and authority but lack the stability or the means to implement policy or govern due to the lack of support from the HoR and to a lesser degree the GNC.[76]

Cells of both extremists and criminal organizations operate within the territory claimed by the GNA. These cells could serve as a focal point for Libyan returnees attempting to either connect with their original support networks or foreign fighters attempting to converge with ideologically aligned actors that are in close proximity to high population areas that are susceptible to attack or potentially serve as a facilitation point for attacks outside of the immediate area both internal and external to Libya.[77]

2.   High Council of State—a.k.a GNC—Tripoli

The HCS primarily consists of Islamists who were voted out in the 2014 elections. Due to the lack of security and the overall lack of faith in those results, the GNC resolved to maintain their hold on power and contest the election. The group is led Khalifa Ghwell and at one time drew their military support from militias based out of Zwara and Misrata. There are indications that their power is fading as supporters split between the GNA or turn towards the remnants of extremists groups and criminal organizations. This is the political group most likely to be receptive to returning foreign fighters due to their Islamic ideology and their hostile attitude towards both the GNA and the HoR.[78]

3.   House of Representatives (HoR)—Grand Marshal Haftar

The Libyan HoR is based in Tobruk in the eastern portion of Libya and is supported by "strongman" Field Marshal Haftar through an alliance of militias and external

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[76] Toaldo and Fitzgerald.

[77] "Libyan Coast Remains Fertile for ISIS and Migrant Traffickers," PBS NewsHour, October 6, 2018, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/libyan-coast-remains-fertile-for-isis-to-regroup-and-traffic-migrants.

[78] Toaldo and Fitzgerald, "A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players."

supporters in Egypt and the UAE as well as others.[79] While the HoR is recognized as the legitimate legislative branch of the government, the HoR gave and promptly withdrew its approval of the government at large and has remained in steady conflict with the GNA executive branch both politically and through proxy forces like local militias.[80]

Grand Marshal Haftar took part in the original coup that placed Muammar Gaddafi into power in 1969. While in service to that regime, he was taken prisoner during the Libyan conflict against Chad in 1987 and fell out of favor with Gaddafi. The United States helped secure his release in 1990, whereupon Haftar took up residence in Langley, Virginia for nearly two decades.[81] He returned to Libya and served as a senior commander in 2011 to fight against Gaddafi with rebel forces. He also organized and commanded the forces who took up arms against the GNC after they refused to accept election results in 2014. While Aguila Saleh Issa holds the official title of Chairman of the Libyan HoR, Field Marshal Haftar is the de facto leader and represents his faction publically.[82]

Haftar was the driving force behind Operation Dignity, which began in 2014. Haftar organized and directed a coalition of militias and official Libyan military forces against Islamist forces he deemed to be a threat to his power and to Libya at large. He has focused on IS, the Benghazi Revolutionary Shura Council, ASL, and the Muslim Brotherhood. Grand Marshal Hafter claimed to have liberated Benghazi in July of 2017 even though conflict is still ongoing.[83]

One of the primary complaints against the LNA and Haftar is a lack of distinction between moderate and extremist Islamists. Some experts have expressed concern that the broad brush attacks against Islamists of all stripes will be a significant motivating factor in

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[79] Ahmed Salah Ali, "Haftar and Salafism: A Dangerous Game," *MENASource* (blog), June 6, 2017, http://www.atlanticcouncil.org/blogs/menasource/haftar-and-salafism-a-dangerous-game.

[80] Toaldo and Fitzgerald, "A Quick Guide to Libya's Main Players."

[81] Ali, "Haftar and Salafism."

[82] Ali.

[83] "Libya Strongman Declares Benghazi Victory," *BBC News*, July 6, 2017, sec. Africa, https://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-40515325.

strengthening Salafi extremism and serve as a focal point for Jihadists to rally around in the future. Haftar's hard line against Islamism has not inoculated him from reports of partnership with Salafist organizations in the East that have worked to expel political and religious rivals when it serves his purposes. This particular branch of Salafism is called Madkhalism and wholly rejects democracy or elections but "the role of wali al-amr (literally one vested with authority) is considered inviolable, as a direct gift from God."[84][85]

The HoR controls significant amounts of territory in the northeastern portion of the country but has not been successful in eliminating extremist or criminal organizations. Additionally, Haftar himself is facing rumors of deteriorating health and has a strained relationship with the HoR. One high profile defector from the LNA, who served as Grand Marshall Haftar's spokesman has decried his use of torture and extreme measures to gain political power. He has also accused Haftar of unnecessarily extending the conflict for his own political gains.[86]

While the HoR or the LNA is unlikely to embrace foreign fighter returnees of any national origin openly, Haftar and his compatriots have shown themselves willing to accept support from all sides of the political and ideological spectrum. There is a possibility that the skills and experience of foreign fighters could still be put to use within the LNA as part of the militias or under the banner of Madkharism as means to a greater political goal.

E.   EXTREMIST ORGANIZATIONS

1.   IS

While there was a long history of Jihadism and unrest in Libya for many decades prior, IS only began to make their push in 2014. However, the Libyan branch of IS did not have the benefit of playing the same role as the protector of a Sunni minority as they did

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[84] Ali, "Haftar and Salafism."

[85] Emadeddin Zahri Muntasser, "Libya's New Menace: Madkhalism," *International Policy Digest* (blog), February 3, 2017, https://intpolicydigest.org/2017/02/03/libya-s-new-menace-madkhalism/.

[86] Abdullah BenIbrahim, "Dignity Operation Spokesperson Defects, Brands Khalifa Haftar a Tyrant," *Libya Observer*, January 22, 2016, https://www.libyaobserver.ly/news/dignity-operation-spokesperson-defects-brands-khalifa-haftar-tyrant.

in Iraq and Syria, which helped drive their recruitment and propaganda campaigns locally and internationally. Libya, and much of North Africa, is almost exclusively Sunni and this lack of an ethnic and cultural denied IS an advantage it had grown to rely on in years past.[87]

They quickly established, then promptly lost, a foothold in Derna in 2014, but moved on to establish a more secure beachhead in Sirte on the northern coast in 2015 where they began gathering intelligence, conducting military operations and assuming a role of governance over the area. They began to build strength through the defections of several notable members of ASL and local militias. This lent credibility to IS as ASL was perceived as being a more local and thus more authentic organization. It was through these connections that they began to establish relationships with local tribal leaders and building networks of militants they could draw upon. In addition to military and intelligence operations they conducted *dawa* as a form of propaganda and recruitment with the distribution of their own messages through the media and their attempts to govern. Examples of their public works, which were executed in order to strengthen their hold over the populace, included the renovation of the Ibn Sina hospital and some repairs and beautification of public spaces and streets. IS gained control over much of the local media, including radio, television and newspapers but failed to limit Internet access and thus their message was diluted by outside sources of information. They also conducted *hisba* promoting their stricter interpretation of sharia law. At their peak, IS was able to control over 150 miles of coastline and significant amounts of territory in and around Sirte.[88] In retrospect, IS was able to establish some legitimacy as a governing agency in Sirte but not to the scale they were able to effect in Iraq and Syria.[89]

The GNA expelled IS from Sirte in the summer of 2016 in an operation called Al-Bunyan Al-Marsous or "Impenetrable Wall." The GNA conducted this operation through the support of local Misratan militias as well as a heavy reliance on U.S. air support with

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[87] Beccaro, "ISIS in Mosul and Sirte," 414.

[88] Livesay and Pavone, "ISIS Regroups to Attack a Fragmented Libya."

[89] Beccaro, "ISIS in Mosul and Sirte."

over 500 strikes by the time operations ended in December.[90] This resulted in an estimated loss of 2,500 fighter to include some of its key leaders within the city and the territory they previously held.[91]

While IS was largely expelled from the territory it held, the organization itself has not completely dissolved. The GNA has dispatched forces to previously held IS territory like Sirte and Sabratha to combat remaining cells, who conduct regular attacks, as well as IS members working in partnership with local criminal operations. A UN report from July of 2018 asserts that "ISIL cells persist around Tripoli, Misrata and Sabratah in the west, with a substantial presence in southern Libya around Ghat and Al Uwainat, and Ajdabiya and Darnah in the east."[92]

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[90] Oliver Imhof and Osama Mansour, "The Last Days of ISIS' Libya Stronghold," *Daily Beast*, July 5, 2017, https://www.thedailybeast.com/the-last-days-of-isis-libya-stronghold.

[91] Livesay and Pavone, "ISIS Regroups to Attack a Fragmented Libya."

[92] Kairat Umarov, "Letter Dated 16 July 2018 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee Pursuant to Resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015) Concerning Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (Da'esh), Al-Qaida and Associated Individuals, Groups, Undertakings and Entities Addressed to the President of the Security Council" (United Nations Security Council Committee, July 27, 2018), https://documents-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N18/201/01/PDF/N1820101.pdf?OpenElement.
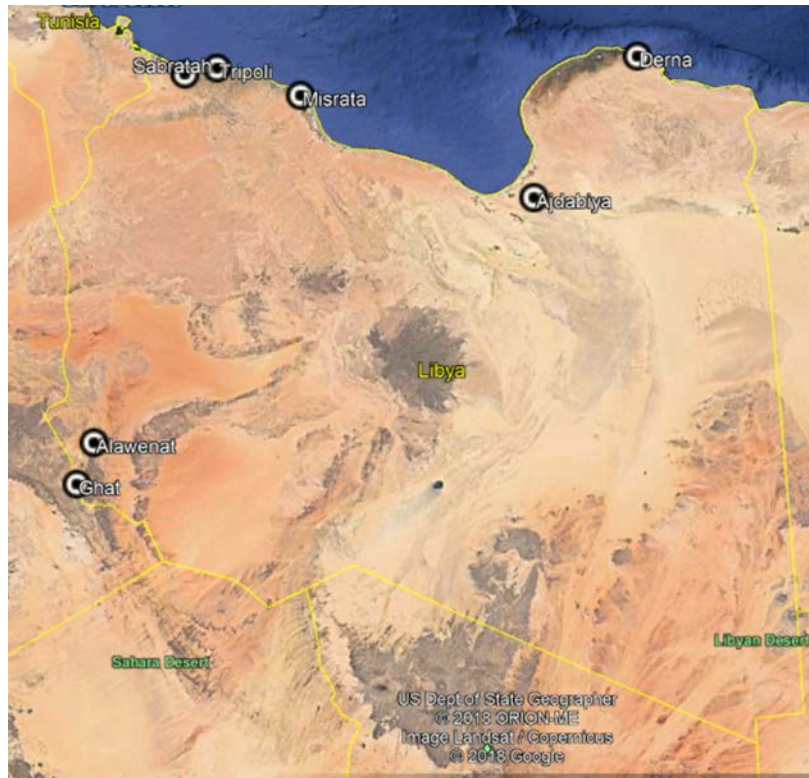
Figure 3.   UN List of Current (as of July 2018) IS Cells Operating
in Libya[93]

There was a rise in IS associated attacks in 2018 with more than a dozen reported. This is a significant increase from four attacks in 2017.[94] The cells conducting these attacks are the most likely destination for foreign fighters of the following categories. The first are foreign fighter returnees of Libyan origin who are returning home after their displacement from Iraq and Syria. Additionally, foreign fighters of non-Libyan origin may choose this poorly governed space with the explicit goal of resurrecting and strengthening IS in Libya. Lastly, there may be an influx of foreign Fighters of non-Libyan origin who with no express intent to continue on the path of Jihadism, but fear legal and social repercussions in their states of origin or those who feel they have nothing to go back to.

[93] Adapted from Umarov.

[94] Livesay and Pavone, "ISIS Regroups to Attack a Fragmented Libya."

2. ASL

ASL announced itself in December of 2011 in Derna and February 2012 in Benghazi and served as an infrastructural base for foreign fighters from that point forward. ASL maintained a strong relationship with their sister organization AST and facilitated the transfer of weapons and training for attacks in Tunisia but based out of Libya where Tunisian security forces had little ability exert force.[95] Aaron Zelin describes ASL as having a number of identities to include "a charity, a security service, a health service, and a religious education provider." They have also been labeled as "a militia, a terrorist organization and a training base for foreign jihadists."[96]ASL initially focused on both *dawa* (outreach) as a means to gain support through the provision of social services inside and outside of Libya. One estimate from 2014 places ASL supporters in Beghazi alone between 45,000 and 50,000.[97] That initial swell of support was halted with the assumption of military offense against the group by Grand Marshal Khalifa Haftar in May 2014. ASL halted most of its *dawa* activities to focus on military action.[98] The group formally disbanded in May of 2017 but some analysts believe ASL has the most potential for "staying power" when compared to other jihadist organizations. This is due to the historical local and regional emphasis that ASL has expressed in the past in contrast to the world-wide aspirations of a group like IS. ASL also retains some of the reputation as a more organic and thus authentic Libyan group with closer familial ties and established relationships with many of the Islamist and jihadist groups in the region.[99]

3. Convergence of Threat Groups in Face of a Mutual Threat

While groups like ISIS and ASL have differing objectives and have come into conflict over those differences, there is also a history of their unification in the face of a

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[95] Zelin, The Others: Foreign Fighters in Libya, 5.

[96] Zelin, "The Rise and Decline of Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya," 104–5.

[97] Henrik Gråtrud and Vidar Benjamin Skretting, "Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya: An Enduring Threat," *Perspectives on Terrorism* 11, no. 1 (February 2017): 3.

[98] Zelin, "The Rise and Decline of Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya," 104.

[99] Gråtrud and Skretting, "Ansar Al-Sharia in Libya," 1–3.

great threat. One example is the alliance of IS and ASL fighting against Haftar in Benghazi in response to his Operation Dignity offensive.[100] The willingness of these groups to work together in the face of adversity and pressure could serve as a converging point for returning foreign fighters and their families.

Some of the fighters, and their families, who are unable or merely have no desire to return to their home states may converge in Libya due to its weak governance and security structures and the remnants of multiple jihadist groups and networks.[101] Due to these weaknesses and internal conflict, Libya has been unable to implement even the legalistic state response that many of their neighbors have. Individuals who may have originated in other countries may make the decision to avoid the near certain chance of judicial punishment and oversight and instead rely on jihadist networks established during their transit to Iraq and Syria or during training in Libya in earlier years.[102]

Push factors, those "root causes," are often more difficult for a state to address. This is true in many North African countries and especially so in Libya. The result is that even as groups like ASL and IS gain and lose power, the draw towards radicalization and the incentive to maintain it when returning remains.

F.   POLICY FOR RETURNEES

Libya, due to its internal divides, lacks any consistent legal or judicial policy for returning fighters of both Libyan and non-Libyan origin. The majority of interactions with returning foreign fighters are on the battlefield or judicially.

G.   CONCLUSIONS

The emphasis for the United States and its allies in their support to Libya should primarily revolve around governance and security. Partnerships with military units like

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[100] Lydia Sizer, *Libya's Terrorism Challenge: Assessing the Salafi-Jihadi Threat* (Washington, D.C.: The Middle East Institute, 2017), 8, https://www.mei.edu/content/countering-transational-terrorism-assessing-salafi-jihadi-movements-libya.

[101] Watanabe, The Next Steps of North Africa's Foreign Fighters, 1.

[102] Watanabe, 3.

AFRICOM and SOCAF should focus on developing trained and sustainable forces under the auspices of the GNA. The HoR, while currently holding significant amounts of territory through its support by outside countries like Saudi Arabia and Egypt, lacks the potential for long-term cohesiveness. This is especially true if reports about Field Marshal Haftar's health are to be believed. This is in addition to his advanced age.

These partnerships will help strengthen the faith of the populace in GNA governed territory and eventually help it to expand outside of the portion of Libya it currently has only a modicum of control over. A strengthened GNA with an adequate security force will also serve to help counter the groups most likely to take advantage of the return of foreign fighters. IS, ASL, the Muslim Brotherhood and others are all able to continue to operate and expand in Libya due to the lack of governance and security.

IS should remain the priority even though they are not a "local" organization. They have proven themselves to be adept at recruitment and network development. Libya is "prime real estate" for this sort of group to consolidate and prepare further operations and they still have connections and motivated members to build upon.

In addition to general governance and security, there should be an added emphasis on the judiciary. USAFRICOM, SOCOM, and DoS are well placed, through Civ/Mil partnership, to help facilitate the training and build the foundations necessary to create a judicial system that can process foreign fighters and their families. This would also necessitate the creation of policy to address the return of non-Libyan fighters to their states of origin. This is particularly challenging as many states want to keep departed foreign fighters as far away from their borders as possible.

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IV. SOCIAL NETWORK ANALYSIS OF THE CONTEXT OF ISIS RETURNEES

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter uses social network analysis (SNA) to provide a quantitative analysis of accounts associated with key words related to extremism, politics, and foreign fighters and linked to either Tunisia or Libya. In essence, I use the case studies to inform my analysis and identify key themes and accounts that are likely to support ISIS returnees or are accounts that they would likely connect with upon their return. The Tunisian case study delineates the current political situation, key players, political parties, and organizations that potentially pose a threat. These threats include the internal insurgency in the west and the regional threats such as IS, AQIM, and the remnants of AST/ASL. It highlights the relative fragility of the government as it rebuilds in post Arab Spring era. The Tunisian case study also brings to light the key issues of the perceptions of a gap between the elites and the mass population. This is especially true in historically neglected areas. All of these factors helped contribute to the initial surge of fighters and highlight which of those players and environmental conditions are still in place as foreign fighters return and make the decision to either reintegrate or hold on to an extremist ideology. The Libyan case study suggests the political and military situation in Libya is so complex that analysis is virtually impossible without a thorough understanding of who is competing for power. This applies to both the official governments competing with each other and the extremist organizations who continue to undermine whatever progress has been made.

1. Initial Data Set

The initial data set is comprised of data drawn from Zignal that was collected from Twitter during the months of September and October. This was done to provide the most up to date accounts as they related to the topic at hand. The initial data set is comprised of 42,378 Twitter accounts with 64,248 edges or connections between them (see Figure 4). The vast majority of these accounts are only loosely connected to the largest sub-cluster and due to its size is unmanageable and not useful for analysis. Modularity analysis

identifies over 9,000 subgroups within this enormous data set. The majority of these are isolates; that is, they are accounts with no ties to other accounts. The next step in this process is a reduction of the mass data set into a more useful product.
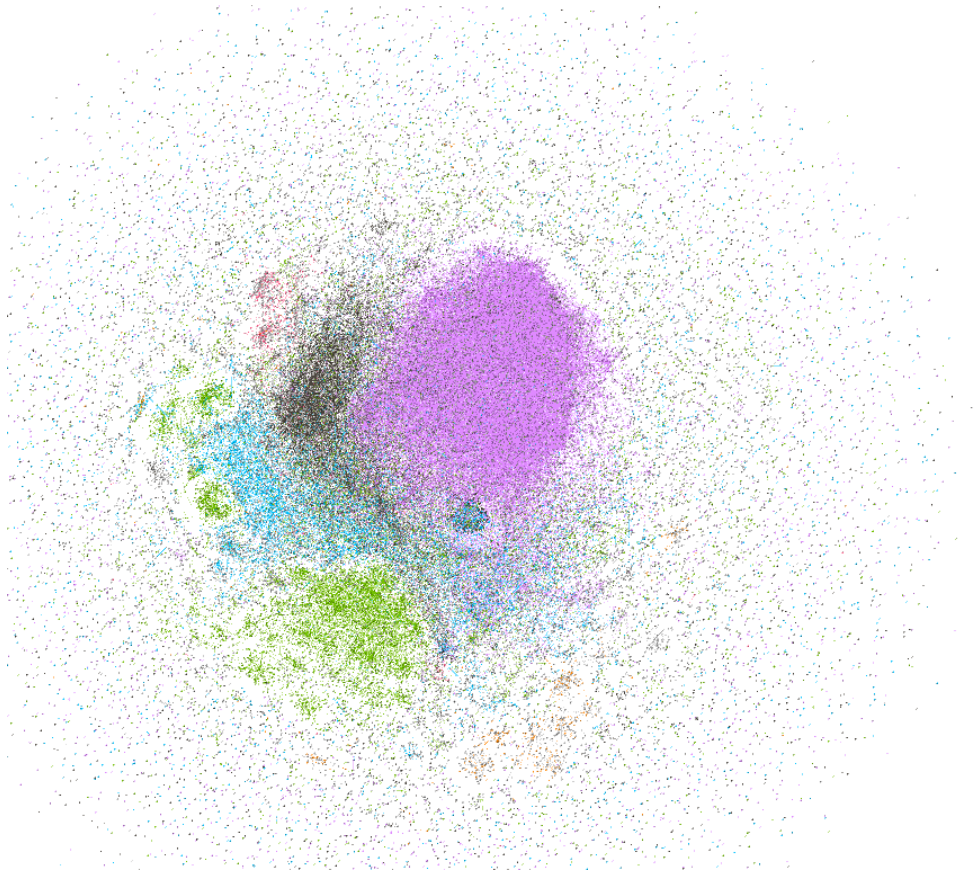

Figure 4.   Initial Data Set Visualized Using Yifan Hu Layout in Gephi[103]

2.   Narrowing the Data

The initial data set of 42,378 was reduced using *k*-core analysis, which is a useful approach for identifying dense pockets (cores) of actors with direct ties to most of the other

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[103] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

members of the core.[104] K-cores are formally defined as "a maximal group of actors, all of who are connected to some number (*k*) of other group members."[105] In short, these are groups interconnected actors who have at least *k* ties with other members of the core. A *6-core* reduced the data set to a total of 2,051 accounts, each with a minimum of six ties and a total of 16,935 connections between them (Figure 5). The data set was additionally screened for geographic account origin from either Libya or Tunisia. Accounts with no geographic location are also included but only those that remain after the *k*-core analysis was complete. These accounts are tied closely enough to Libyan and Tunisian accounts that they retain analytical value.

3.   Modularity Clusters

The reduced dataset, now to be referred to simply as the network, was analyzed using a community detection algorithm or what is sometimes called modularity analysis in order to identify the optimal number of subgroups based on the pattern of ties in the network. Modularity analysis assumes that subgroups have more ties within and fewer ties between them than one would expect in a random graph of the same size and density. Gephi's modularity algorithm identified five (5) subclusters (different colored nodes in Figure 5). Using a layout algorithm called Yifan Hu, Gephi broadly aligns the Libyan accounts on the bottom of Figure 5 (subclusters 0,1, and 3) and the Tunisian accounts (subclusters 2) towards the top. Subcluster 4 is mostly aligned with Libyan originated accounts but lies between the two sections as there are ties to accounts from both countries. The subclusters are labeled in order by the number of nodes they contain within them with subcluster 0 having the most actors (41.83% of the total) and subcluster 4 (3.46% of the total) having the least.

These clusters will be compared individually and against each other using the social network analysis metrics of hub, authority, and betweenness centrality in order to identify

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[104] Daniel Cunningham, Sean F. Everton, and Philip J. Murphy. 2016. Understanding Dark Networks: A Strategic Framework for the Use of Social Network Analysis. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, p. 118

[105] Sean F. Everton, *Disrupting Dark Networks* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

common themes and characteristics of the top accounts. These metrics were chosen to help identify accounts with whom a returning foreign fighter, or their family, would potentially interact or connect. The metrics for each category have been normalized so that scores range between 0.0 and 1.0. Google and Microsoft translation software was used to facilitate analysis of all accounts. Definitions of these metrics can be found in the appendix.
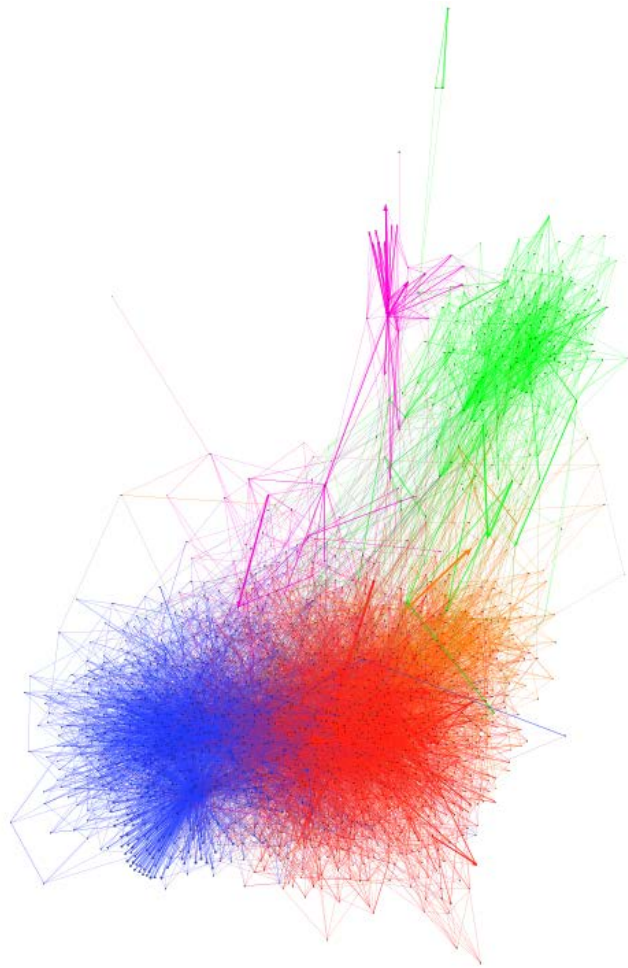
Figure 5.   Reduced *6*-Core Network, Geographically Limited to Accounts Originating in Tunisia, Libya, or Null (no data). Colors Indicate Subclusters.[106]

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[106] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

a. *Modularity Cluster 0*

This is the largest subcluster within the network and is primarily aligned with accounts labeled as originating in Libya. It consists of 858 separate accounts with 6,147 connections between them. The network visualization in Figure 6 colors the accounts (nodes) by country of origin. Most of the top-ranked accounts in terms of hub, authority, or betweenness centrality self-identify as originating in Libya (see Table 2).

Figure 6.   Modularity Cluster 0—Gephi Visualization[107]

[107] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

Table 2.   Subcluster 0 Top Scoring Accounts[108]

Top 5 Hub Centrality

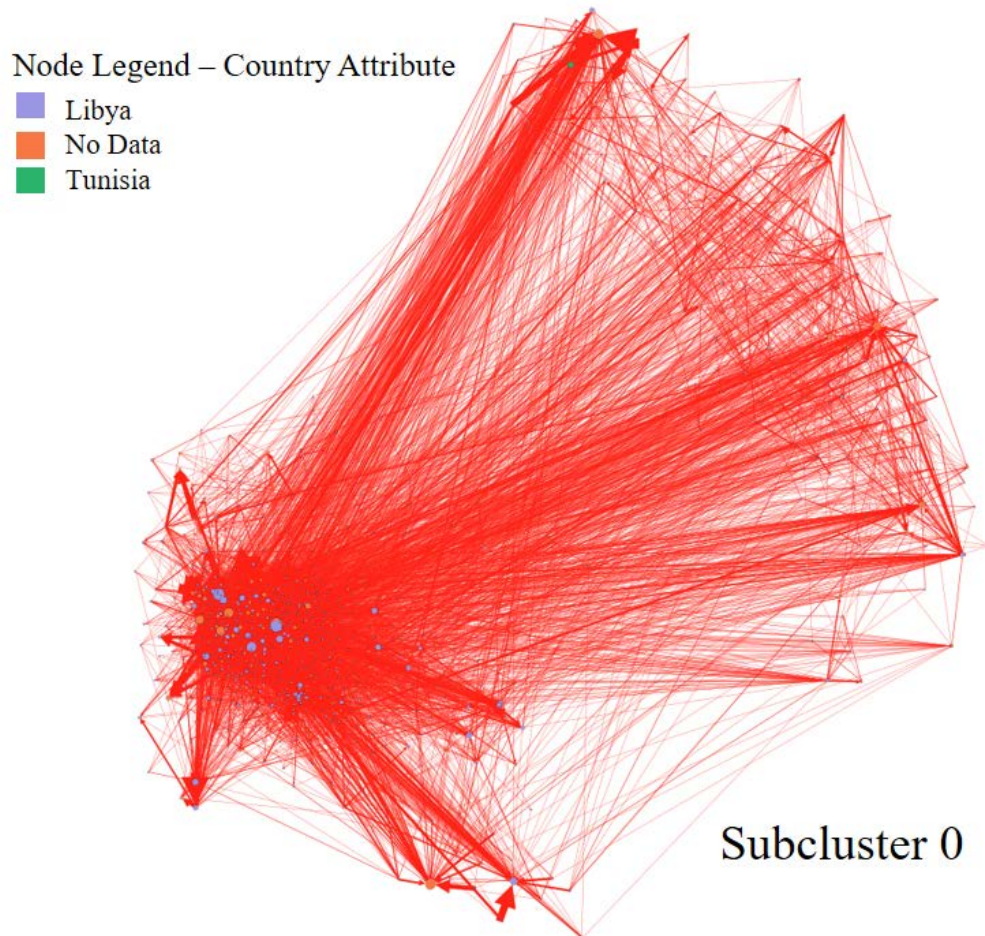| Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Hub Score	Followers
trhonymohamed	Male	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.158	8,749
bushnaff	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.153	6,555
sarahssanoussi	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.123	391
s	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.089	92,667
waad_algeddafi	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.088	3,877

Top 5 – Authority Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Authority	Followers
matogsaleh				0.135	
osamathini	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.105	3,449
lywitness	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.104	2,245
aliwahida				0.074	
observatoryly	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.073	13,114

Top 5 - Betweeness Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Betweenness Centrality	Followers
bushnaff	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.090	6,555
hiba76sh	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.045	7,035
motazkraif	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.028	12,634
mohamedsh82	Male	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.025	1,963
elganga90	Male	Libya	Az Zawiyah	0.019	1,487

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[108] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

The accounts scoring highest in hub centrality are generally posting pro-Libyan content through they support competing factions in the current conflict between the GNA and HoR and even one account who longs for the days of Gaddafi. There are multiple references across these accounts to local fighters, martyrdom and Islamic quotes and phrases supporting their positions. These are the type of accounts that a newcomer to the region may come across when looking for a resource to point them towards accounts with high authority scores.

The accounts ranked highest in terms of authority centrality include two Libyan news organizations as well as accounts with international content. These are the accounts that a newcomer might look to as sources of information and were possibly found through the accounts with a high hub score.

The accounts ranked highest in betweeneess centrality shared fewer common themes; posts centered on local issues and how they were affected by international actors like NGOs, aid organizations and the UN.

Accounts of note include @osamathini (top five in authority centrality), who claims to be an "Ambassador of the South and the Libyan Desert." This is an example of someone who could be easily found by a foreign fighter or a recent arrival looking for contacts or situational information on the ungoverned southern portion of Libya. Additionally, @elganga90 (betweenness) has ties to a German consulting firm and expresses his support for #illegalimmigrants and human rights oversight. Only one accounts, @bushnaff, appears in multiple top 5 categories (hub and betweenness), but she appears to be more of a traditional social media user posting pictures of food and her daily activities. This account could still be easily found by Libyan twitter users expanding their networks but lacks any political, military or economic content.

b.   *Modularity Cluster 1*

Subcluster 1, while having the second fewest total number of actors, was subjectively one of the most politically and militarily active groups. It contains 206 nodes, which share 933 ties among them. Approximately 75% of the accounts identify as originating in Libya, with 22% lacking any country of origin attributes. Five originated in

Tunisia but all scored low in terms of hub, authority, and betweenness centrality. This cluster was the most active in regards to political and military activities and news stories. Subcluster 1 is presented in Figure 7.
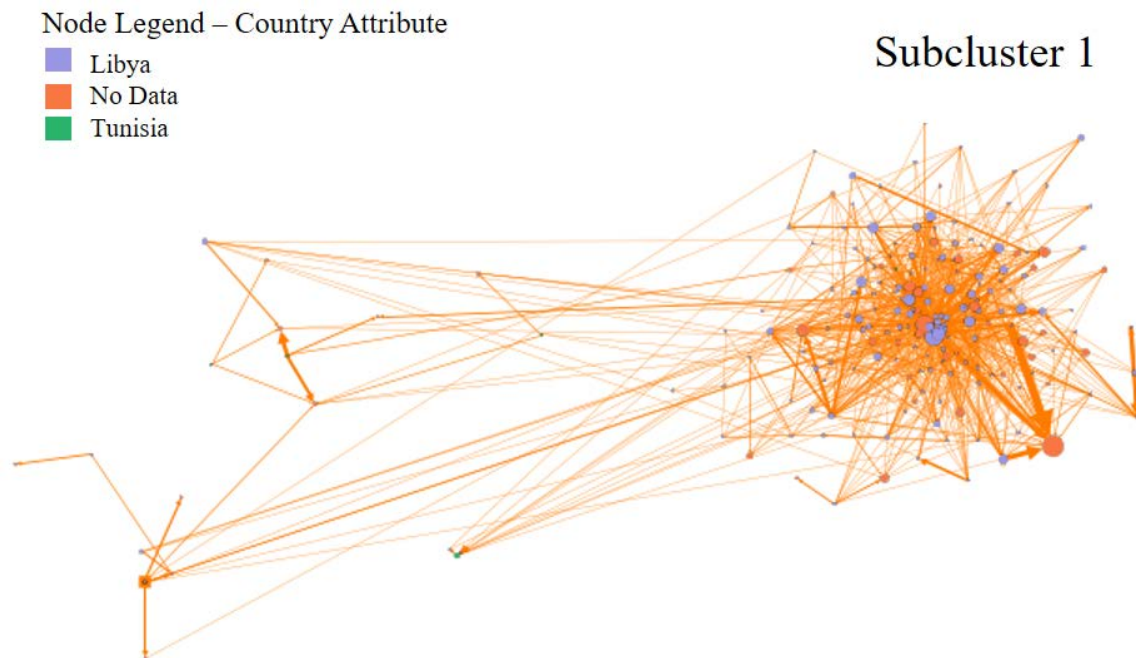
Figure 7.   Modularity Cluster 1—Gephi Visualization[109]

Most of the top-ranked accounts in terms of hub centrality are well established with creation dates as far back as 2011 (see Table 3). The exception is @samelibya3, which was created in January 2018. Islamic themes and quotes were present throughout all of the accounts. The @samelibya3 account references the failures of both the HoR and the GNA and displays an explicit bias against outside countries like Israel and Saudi Arabia. The author claims that Libyans are ignorant of the crimes their government is committing against them.

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[109] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

Table 3.   Subcluster 1—Top Scoring Accounts[110]

Top 5 – Hub Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Hub Score	Followers
samelibya3	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.023	303
__benghazi	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.020	2,641
zakbouhali	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.015	3,695
azzubia94	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.015	1,259
riyadhalrifai	Male	Libya	Benghazi	0.014	1,084

Top 5 – Authority Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Authority	Followers
93_m1	Male	Libya	Misratah	0.011	1,126
guma_el_gamaty	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.010	170,803
elashwa2i				0.010	
diamondodoo				0.009	
salimgashout72	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.008	483

Top 5 - Betweenness Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Betweenness Centrality	Followers
shgluf	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.022	4,352
93_m1	Male	Libya	Misratah	0.015	1,126
benghazi_of	Male	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.011	60
apqybap	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.010	4,314
dadsos22	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.007	3,191

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[110] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

A second account of interest among the top-ranked hubs is @__benghazi, whose tweets include regular references to colonization and the importance of independence from outsiders. While this account has posted anti-GNA and HoR tweets, it also claims to be an individual serving in the Army with ties to both AQ and IS (see Figure 8). The remaining top-ranked scorers in hub centrality posted political and economic news regularly, as well as on high visibility media topics like the conflict in Yemen and Jamal Khashoggi.

Figure 8.　　@__benghazi Twitter Posting Alleging Army Officer
Ties to IS and AQ[111]

The top-ranked accounts in terms of authority centrality are also politically and militarily driven. The top scoring account, which also ranked second in betweenness, is @93_m1. This account has an overt anti-HoR and Haftar bias and is focused on the cities of Benghazi and Derna. Aside from regular posts about his anti-Saudi positions and economic postings, one tweet stood out, which stated, "Freedom leads to death💀" (Figure 9).

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111 Benghazi (@__benghazi), "فيه الخير منتمي لتنظيم القاعدة وداعش ومحتفظ ببطاقة الجيش امتاعه" ,كيان. [Al-Khair is affiliated with al-Qaeda , ISIS, and retaining the Army card] October 8, 2018, Twitter. https://twitter.com/__benghazi/status/1049427797859549184.

Figure 9.   @93_m1 Freedom Tweet[112]

A second account of interest is that of Guma El-Gamaty. He is a Libyan politician who was educated in the UK and lived in exile for most of Gaddafi's rule. He served as the liaison for the transitionary NTC government and now heads the Taghyeer Party in Libya, which is not Islamically aligned. He has a significant number of followers with over 170,000. He is focused on economic issues like many of the accounts in this cluster. He has also authored several articles, the most recent of which is titled, "How Can Libya Be Stabilized?: Efforts To Stabilise The Situation in Libya Should Start with Curbing Foreign Interference in the Country."[113] The article was an Al-Jazeera op-ed in August of 2018; it attempts to highlight the influence that the UAE and Egypt have exerted with their support to Grand Marshal Haftar and the LNA, as well as the competing attempts of both France and Italy to unify the country overall. El-Gamaty asserts that independence from all of these outside nations is essential to the drafting and passing of a new constitution that could potentially unite all of Libya. This is an account of a mid-tier politician and academic who

[112] Mohammed BZ (@93_m1), الحرية تؤدي الى الموت [Freedom leads to death 💀], Twitter, November 3, 2018, https://twitter.com/93_m1/status/1058848268711612416.

[113] Guma El-Gamaty, "How Can Libya Be Stabilized?: Efforts To Stabilise The Situation in Libya Should Start with Curbing Foreign Interference in the Country."" *Al Jazeera*, August 30, 2018, https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/libya-stabilised-180830151116488.html.

should be regularly reviewed if only to gain insight into the political and economic struggles in Libya. Hostile actors are also likely within his significant follower account and could potentially be identified with a deeper look. The final metric of betweenness identifies at least two accounts of interest. The first is the aforementioned @93_m1 with his focus on Benghazi and Derna as well as his post highlighting the dangers of freedom. The top scoring account belongs to @shgluf whose posts are of a more military nature although he also tweets regular political postings. This account regularly tweets anti-Haftar posts as well as original content (non-retweets of other accounts) with photos depicting military vehicles and operations currently ongoing in Sabratha and Ajilat. This account, if regularly monitored, could provide useful intelligence in the future.

Figure 10.   @schlguf Twitter Posts of Military and Security Operations[114]

c.   *Modularity Cluster 2*

Subcluster 2 ranked third out of five in a cluster with a total number of actors with 238 accounts sharing 1,287 connections. This was a significant drop in the total number of accounts in the next highest cluster (Subcluster 3—678 total accounts). This subcluster was the only one analyzed that contained a majority of accounts with origination data from Tunisia (156 accounts—75% subcluster total). The remainder in this subcluster lacked origination data except for 13 accounts from Libya.

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[114] Jane Hqlov (@shgluf), "Security alert center," Twitter, November 4, 2018, https://twitter.com/shgluf/status/1059058140837240839.

Node Legend – Country Attribute
- Libya
- No Data
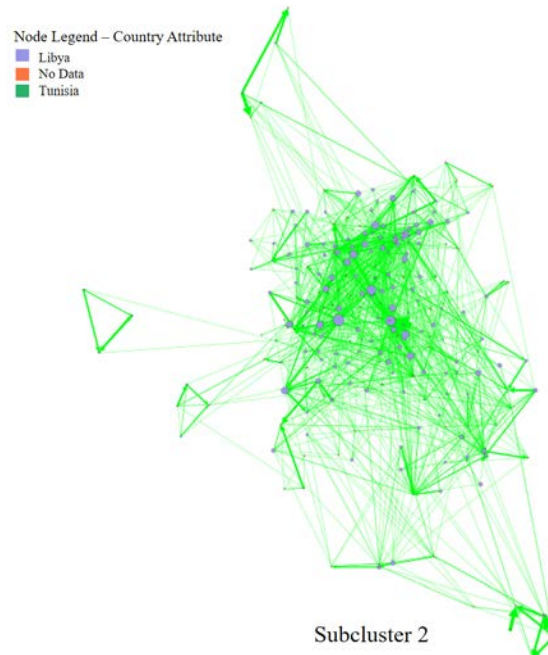- Tunisia

Subcluster 2

Figure 11.   Modularity Cluster 2—Gephi Visualization[115]

The top-ranking accounts in terms of hub centrality consistently conveyed themes of Islamic imagery and quotes as well as some military and political content. Interestingly, all of the accounts with the top-ranking hub scores did originate from Libya even though they made up the minority of actors in this subcluster. This is most likely due to their connections to accounts outside of the subcluster even though they retained enough connections to be grouped with the majority Tunisian group. The top-ranked account, @akai_senkoo, included an Islamic reference in nearly all of his posts and expressed general anti-Western sentiments. The other account of note, @Rjaonkey_mhamad, includes profile photos of a Fort Knox tank and a military style glove. The account user is "The Unknown Soldier." This account focused on international politics at both the regional and worldwide level with regular posts against Qatar and the UN. The remaining top-ranked accounts included some political content and regular postings from Russia Today (RT).

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[115] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

Table 4.   Subcluster 2—Top Scoring Accounts[116]

Top 5 Hub Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Hub Score	Followers
akai_senkoo	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.012	64
worfaly	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.011	72
meme88766654	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.010	788
rjaonkey_mhamad	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.008	328
anasmilad51	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.004	427

Top 5 – Authority Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Authority	Followers
alhadath				0.011	
skynewsarabia				0.010	
ajplusarabi				0.007	
juli_ree				0.004	
tsaolaat				0.003	

Top 5 - Betweenness Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Betweenness Centrality	Followers
khaoula_rmd	Unknown	Tunisia	Kebili	0.028	5,011
amar_yosra	Male	Tunisia	Kebili	0.019	17
ghofranekb	Unknown	Tunisia	Kebili	0.017	7,545
sanamahfoudhi	Female	Tunisia	Kebili	0.011	1,557
tounisia12345	Unknown	Tunisia	Kebili	0.008	9,376

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[116] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

The highest-ranking authority accounts were all focused on news and political reporting. The top two accounts, @alhadath and @skynewsarabia, seemed relatively mainstream but the account @AJplusarabi had an explicit anti-Israel bias. The betweenness metric provided no accounts of interest. They were primarily centered on students and local soccer. As in other clusters with little political or military posting, these accounts would be likely points of connection to youth, but they are not directly tied to the Libyan conflict or extremism.

d.   *Modularity Cluster 3*

This is the second largest subcluster within the network. It has 678 accounts with a total number of 4,784 connections between them. 576 accounts identify with an origin in Libya and make up over 84% of the total. There is only one Tunisian account and 102 accounts with no identifying geographic data. Figure 12 presents Subcluster 3.
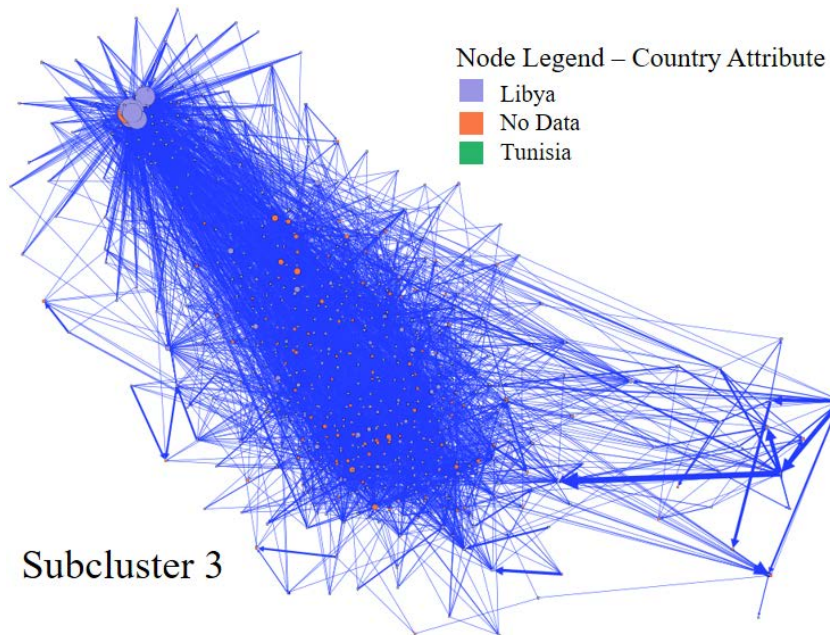

Figure 12.   Modularity Cluster 3—Gephi Visualization[117]

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[117] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

Table 5. Subcluster 3—Top Scoring Accounts[118]

Top 5 Hub Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Hub Score	Followers
amanyfaraj_	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.112	3,163
elferjhanie	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.108	84
rema97bn	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.106	2,973
felsahly	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.105	629
ahmed__toni	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.105	170

Top 5 – Authority Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Authority	Followers
dokadokaly	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.327	1,993
hamoalgali	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.322	33,616
boshgma	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.322	67,287
soh_eljahmi				0.316	
h_elbargathi	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.310	918

Top 5 - Betweenness Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Betweenness Centrality	Followers
somahema2008	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.023	136
bawendi	Unknown	Libya	Tajura' wa an Nawahi al Arba	0.019	5,741
wea_94	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.017	185
aziza_boushhiwa	Unknown	Tunisia	Tunis	0.016	618
mohamed72308485	Male	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.016	448

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[118] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

This subcluster was relatively apolitical, and the top-ranked accounts per all three metrics focused on youth, student culture, and education. There was also a common theme of the victims of conflict, especially those related to Benghazi. While there is little here to entice someone looking for politics or religious content, the top-ranked accounts are likely ones that a youthful person might come across. This is pertinent to the foreign fighter issue, as young people were the explicit targets of radicalization propaganda and those returning would likely connect with accounts like these.

e. *Modularity Cluster 4*

This cluster was the smallest of the five with only 71 accounts and 212 connections between them. The Gephi visualization (Figure 13) displays the cluster's relative small size and, in context of the larger network, its relative distance from the rest of the larger and more densely populated and connected clusters.
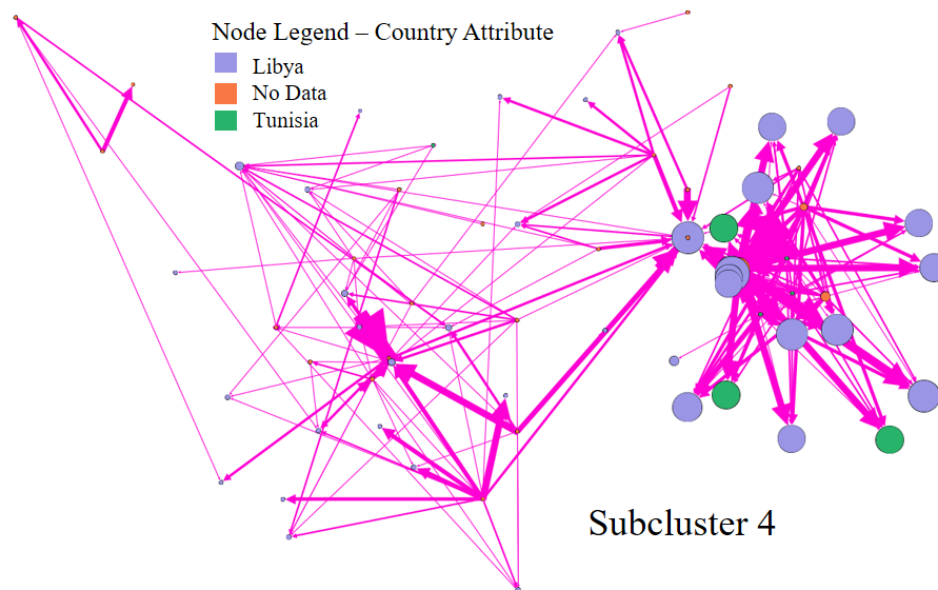

Figure 13.   Modularity Cluster 4—Gephi Visualization[119]

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[119] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

Table 6.   Subcluster 4—Top Scoring Accounts[120]

Top 5 Hub Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Hub Score	Followers
es92_ma	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00936	2,819
69alzaem	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00734	1,664
3h48_2011	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.00719	326
p5axtrb1nnpmugp	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00609	64
starstarinthesk	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00492	1,041

Top 5 – Authority Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Authority	Followers
mltga212				0.01588	
bbcarabicalerts				0.00606	
estqfarr				0.00428	
alazkkar				0.00396	
dr_alqarnee				0.00388	

Top 5 - Betweeness Centrality

Twitter Account Name	Gender	Country	State / Province	Betweeness Centrality	Followers
es92_ma	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00198	2,819
ice_foaa	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00190	2,356
nahawnd97	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00147	3,055
3h48_2011	Unknown	Libya	Benghazi	0.00125	326
halaalsanusi	Unknown	Libya	Al Jufrah	0.00094	4,225

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[120] Adapted from sources outlined in the Appendix.

The accounts with the highest hub centrality scores in this cluster focused almost exclusively on Islamic quotes with little to no political content. The top-five accounts ranked high in authority centrality were split between news sites like @BBCArabic, an Islamic preacher with 19 million followers and more religious accounts with no overt political motive. The accounts scoring highest in terms of betweenness shared the common theme of medical students who interspersed their Islamic quotes with traditional social media pictures and content of their food, friends and activities. While the cluster itself is not particularly useful for this analysis, it does highlight the utility of the data collection methods and the analytical tools that allow us to identify these likely extraneous accounts and apply effort to those clusters and accounts that could be potentially more profitable and informative.

B.   CONCLUSIONS

Analysis of the reduced network and of the individual subclusters provided some helpful insights into certain groups and individual accounts. The modularity analysis separated the reduced network into manageable subclusters that often shared key traits among their users and the content they posted. Using the Social Network Analysis metrics of hub, authority and betweenness centrality, we were able to identify some key accounts. Analysis of the posts from these accounts was informed through the case studies in Chapter II (Tunisia) and Chapter III (Libya).

The methodology used in this analysis provided few accounts that were explicit or obvious in their support of any particular group. Those accounts with strong feelings about a group or individual usually expressed in a negative context. In this analysis, many of the accounts specifically mentioned Grand Marshal Haftar and his political and military activities as an example. Most accounts were self-identified as originating in Libya. This could merely be a direct result of Libya's higher total population but it was also likely influenced by the keywords used in the initial Zignal Labs collection of data. The conflict in Libya between the GNA, the HoR, Jihadist groups and criminal networks likely lent itself to an environment where the topics most closely related to terrorism, foreign fighters, military operations and political activities were flagged and collected by Zignal. This is in contrast to Tunisia, which was the source of the minority of accounts and while fragile and facing internal challenges, is relatively governed.

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V. CONCLUSIONS

One of the consistent themes that emerged throughout this thesis is the role of governance in a state. The transition to democracy in Tunisia from an authoritarian regime had many benefits for the state and for the region. Unfortunately, this also had the effect of creating high expectations among the population. When these social, economic and political expectations were not met, it created a perfect opportunity for outside groups to take advantage and recruit and radicalize in a way that would have been much more difficult just a few years earlier. Tunisia is looked at as the example of how states can create and implement secular representative democracy with a relatively small amount of bloodshed and upset. This is in contrast to their neighbors in the region, like Egypt or Libya, who faced much more conflict and in some cases are stilled mired in conflict that arose from the Arab Spring. The weak transitional government of Tunisia, in the years immediately following regime change, was not in a position to monitor their populations or to counter the negative actors attempting to extract as many fighters and resources as possible.

Since the heyday of foreign fighters flows out of the country, Tunisia has slowly grown and strengthened its institutional capacity with the aid of both their neighbors and other, more democratically mature, nations in the West. While many of the conditions that fermented such a potent extremist recruiting environment are still in place, the Tunisians have grown in their economic, intelligence and security capabilities. It is unlikely that groups like IS would be able to draw as many fighters and supporters in the modern environment as they were able to in the early transition years. Unfortunately, conditions exist in Tunisia that ISIS returnees could exploit. Such conditions include overall dissatisfaction with the government and democracy itself, the perception of a lack of opportunity for much of the population, glacially slow economic growth and the continuation of policies that neglect historically underrepresented portions of the country. In short, Tunisia has a greater ability to track, counter and monitor individuals with the potential to support extremism but has done very little to address the conditions that create them in the first place.

Libya is still in a much more vulnerable position when compared to its neighbors, especially Tunisia. Libya had a longer period of transition to anything resembling an official government and faces the additional challenges of infighting between the official power bases. This is in addition to the more traditional threats of extremist groups like IS, AST and AQIM as well as criminal groups smuggling people, arms and other illicit goods. Tunisia can be described as 'holding steady' while there is little possibility of stability or adequate governance taking hold in Tunisia any time in the near future. That instability the "pull" potential of returning foreign fighters as well as facilitating the growth of existing threats, especially in the southern areas of Libya outside the control of either the GNA or Haftar and the LNA / HoR.

The expulsion of IS from previously held territory by both the GNA with the Misratan Militias or the LNA and its supporters could lead outsiders to believe that the threat is eliminated. At best, it has disrupted the local networks and forced IS to take on a more 'traditional' tact of hiding within vulnerable populations as they prepare to further disrupt and attack in North Africa and Europe. At worst, these were unifying acts that helped drive formerly competing groups together in the face of a common enemy. That united front will be able to more easily accept newcomers, like returning foreign fighters, as their ideology is more expansive. This is not to suggest that any alliances will be permanent but for the immediate future the threat persists.

In both Tunisia and Libya, the most important take away from this research is the conclusion that steady pressure and oversight must be applied in order to prevent returnees from converging on existing extremist networks thus strengthening them over time. This will require political will and adequate resources to the security forces of the states. Additionally, political leaders will be forced to take on some level of risk when assessing returnees in order to prevent the systems from being completely overrun.

APPENDIX. SNA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

A.   ZIGNAL

Zignal Labs is an online data aggregator and analysis tool that centers around individual campaigns for broad topics, such as a name brand or a political or social topic, and more specific profiles built around provided key words across the open source media spectrum. Zignal draws from the following data sources detailed in Table 7.

Table 7.   Data Sources from which Zignal Labs Draws[121]

Data Source	More Information
Twitter	- All public tweets - No promoted or private tweets
News	- Over 100,000 news websites worldwide - ~4 million articles/day
Blogs	- Over 30 million blogs worldwide - ~4 million posts/day
Facebook	- Page Posts: Posts from Admins of the Public Page - User Posts: Posts from any users on Public Pages - Comments: Comments on posts on Public Pages
Social Video	- 6 major social video networks, including YouTube, Youku and DailyMotion - ~4 million videos/day
LexisNexis	- Exclusive content from LexisNexis news corpus and analytics solutions - 2000+ magazines and journals, 3000+ newspapers, newswires, and press releases - Access to full text stories (additional fee)
Broadcast	- Coverage of over 1,000 TV stations in the US, Canada and UK including news and other programming - ~1.5 million minutes of video a day
Instagram	- Posts from Instagram matching specific hashtags will be ingested
Forums	- Content from more than 9,000 online discussion sites where people hold conversations in the form of posted messages, centered around a single topic - ~125,000 posts/day
Q&A	- Content from platforms where users can ask questions and receive answers from the community - Main sites include Quora and Yahoo! Answers
Reviews	- User-generated reviews on companies or products - Main sites include Glassdoor and Amazon
Reddit	- Posts: posts from Reddit users - Comment: comments on Reddit posts - Subreddits: access to the top 16,000 sub-reddits and growing

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[121] Adapted from Zignal Labs Help Portal," accessed November 6, 2018, https://zignallabs.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/24000006641-sources.

The service provides a real time dashboard based on both the campaign and the specific profiles. This allows the user to see real time metrics and provides tools or desktop "widgets" to visualize the incoming data. Some of the more useful widgets include total mentions, average counts, net sentiment on keywords, top authors, top hashtags, visual depictions of the origins of collected data and even an emoji cloud.[122]
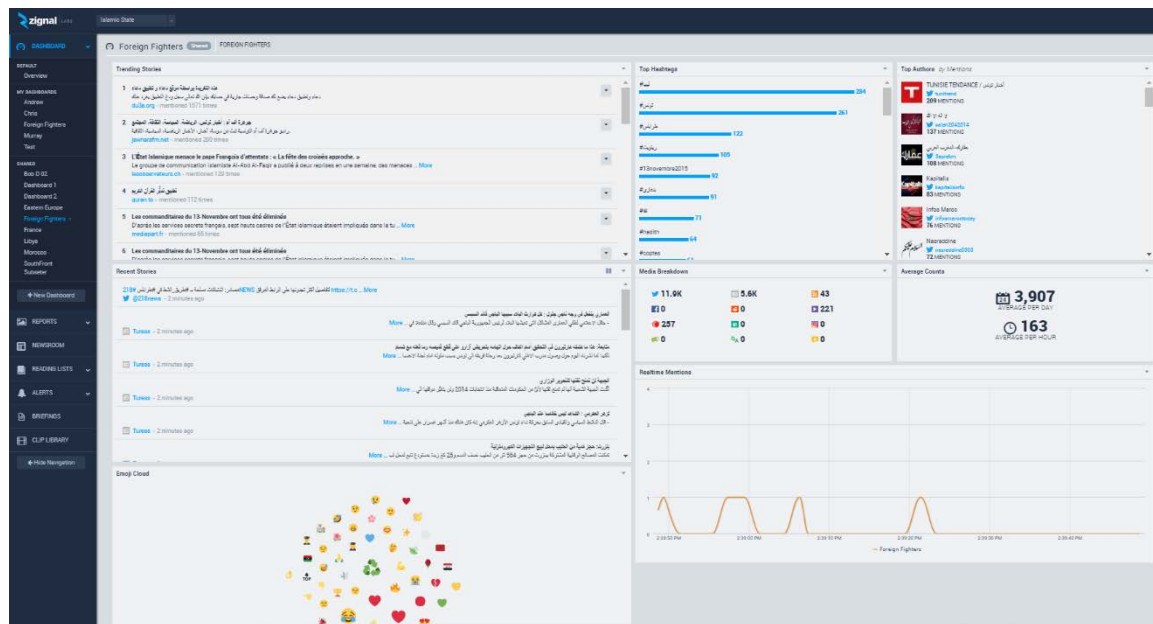

Figure 14.   Zignal Labs Dashboard Example

The other primary function that was utilized for this project was the data export tool. A list of terms related to the Islamic State, Tunisian and Libyan government, foreign fighters were inputted into the application and geographically limited to North Africa. Zignal scanned, collected and stored the information on those keywords regularly and in November of 2018 a two-month data pull was enacted. This data was exported into an edge list that contained pertinent information on Twitter accounts that met the geographic and key word criteria. That edge list was then processed via the Gephi network analysis tool.

122 "System Overview : Zignal Labs Help Portal," accessed November 6, 2018, https://zignallabs.freshdesk.com/support/solutions/articles/24000006640-system-overview.

B.   GEPHI

Gephi is an open-source software program used for network visualization and analysis. It is user friendly and provides intuitive visual renderings of complex networks. In addition to its visual capabilities, the program has basic metrics and analysis tools as well as a data exporter that allows users to go to the granular level of individual accounts if they merit a further look.

C.   HUBS AND AUTHORITIES

"The hubs and authorities algorithm was initially designed for identifying which web pages functioned as hubs and which ones functioned as authorities where a good hub was defined as one that points to many good authorities, and a good authority is one that is pointed to by many good hubs." These are the sources of information and the brokers of information.[123]

D.   BETWEENNESS CENTRALITY

"Betweenness centrality measures the extent to which each actor lies on the shortest path between all other actors in a network." This is a measure to quantify the amount of influence an actor has over the flow of information within the network.[124]

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[123] Everton, Disrupting Dark Networks.

[124] Everton.

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